

# P O E M S

238 a 55

BY

CHARACTACUS  
WILLIAM MASON, M. A.



VOLUME II.

G L A S G O W:

PRINTED BY ROBERT & ANDREW FOULIS,

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M.DCC.LXXIV.

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P O E M S

BY

CHARACTERS:

WILLIAM MASON, M.A.



OF THE

ANGLICAN

GREEK TRAGEDY

WITH A HISTORY OF THE

G. L. A. S. O. W.

PRINTED BY ROBERT A. ANDREW FOR THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
MDCCLXXIV



# CARACTACUS:

Written on the MODEL

OF THE

A N C I E N T

G R E E K T R A G E D Y.

First published in the year 1759.

CARACTACUS:

Written on the Model

THE **Nos mūnera Phoebo**  
**Misimus; et lectas DRUIDUM de gente CHOREAS.**

THE **MILTON.**

CRICK TRAGEDY.

First published in the year 1733.

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VOL. 1

## THE ARGUMENT.

CARACTACUS, King of the Silures, having been defeated by Ostorius, the Roman Praefect, his Queen taken prisoner, and his Son (as it is supposed) either slain or fled, retired with his only Daughter, and took sanctuary amongst the Druids in Mona. Ostorius, after the battle, leaving garrisons in the conquered country, marched to subdue the northern part of Britain, and led his troops to the frontiers of the Brigantes, then governed by Cartismandua. This Queen, dreading the victorious enemy, made a truce with him; one of the conditions of which was, that she should assist the Romans in securing the British King, that he might be carried to Rome to grace the triumph of Claudius. She accordingly gave up her two Sons as hostages, to be sent themselves to Rome, in case they did not seduce Caractacus from his sanctuary, to which place they were to be accompanied by Aulus Didius, and a sufficient force, to effect that design.

The Drama opens on their arrival in the consecrated grove, a little before midnight, and about the time when the Druids, who form the Chorus, were preparing the ceremonial of Caractacus's admission into their order. The two Princes are seized as spies, and the incidents, consequent upon this, form what is called the Episode of the piece. The Exode, or Catastrophe, is prepared by the coming of Arviragus the

King's son, who, having escaped with life in the late battle, had employed the intermediate time in privately collecting his Father's scattered forces, to put him again in a condition of facing the enemy. His bravery, in defending his Father and the Druids, occasions the Peripetia, or change of fortune; and his death, with the final captivity of Caractacus, concludes the Tragedy.

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## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, King of Siam

Princess, daughter of the King of Siam

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## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AULUS DIDIUS, the Roman General.

VELLINUS } Sons of Cartifmandua.  
ELIDURUS }

\* CHORUS, of DRUIDS and BARDS.

CARACTACUS.

EVELINA, daughter to Caractacus.

ARVIRAGUS, son to Caractacus.

SCENE, MONA.

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\* The Dramatic part of the chorus is supposed to be chiefly spoken by the Principal Druid; the Lyrical part sung by the Bards.

# C A R A C T A C U S,

M A.

A.

## D R A M A T I C P O E M.

AULUS DIDIDIUS, WITH ROMANS.

THIS is the secret centre of the isle :

Here, Romans, pause, and let the eye of wonder  
Gaze on the solemn scene ; behold yon oak,  
How stern he frowns, and with his broad brown arms  
Chills the pale plain beneath him : mark yon altar,  
The dark stream brawling round its rugged base,  
These cliffs, these yawning caverns, this wide circus,  
Kirted with unhewn stone : they awe my soul,  
As if the very Genius of the place

posed to  
Lyrical

Himself appear'd, and with terrific tread  
Walk'd thro' his drear domain. And yet, my friends,  
If shapes like his be but the fancy's coinage)  
Surely there is a hidden power, that reigns  
Mid the lone majesty of untam'd nature,  
Controuling sober reason ; tell me else,  
Why do these haunts of barb'rous superstition  
Overcome me thus ? I scorn them, yet they awe me,  
Call forth the British Princes : in this gloom

I mean to school them to our enterprise.

[Enter Vellinus and Elidurus.]

AULUS DIDIUS, VELLINUS, ELIDURUS.

Ye pledges dear of Cartismandua's faith,  
Approach! and to mine uninstructed ear  
Explain this scene of horror.

ELIDURUS.

Daring Roman,  
Know that thou stand'st on consecrated ground:  
'These mighty piles of magic-planted rock,  
'Thus rang'd in mystic order, mark the place  
Where but at times of holiest festival  
The Druid leads his train.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Where dwells the fear?

VELLINUS.

In yonder shaggy cave; on which the moon  
Now sheds a side-long gleam. His brotherhood  
Possess the neighb'ring cliffs.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Yet up the hill

Mine eye descries a distant range of caves,  
Delv'd in the ridges of the craggy steep:  
And this way still another.

ELIDURUS.

On the left

Reside the Sages skill'd in Nature's lore:  
The changeful universe, its numbers, powers,



# C A R A C T A C U S.

12

*Elidurus.* Studious they measure, save when meditation  
Gives place to holy rites : then in the grove  
Each hath his rank and function. Yonder grots  
*US.* Are tenanted by Bards, who nightly thence,  
Rob'd in their flowing vests of innocent white,  
Descend, with harps that glitter to the moon,  
Hymning immortal strains. The spirits of air,  
Of earth, of water, nay of heav'n itself,  
Do listen to their lay : and oft, 'tis said,  
In visible shapes dance they a magic round  
To the high minstrelsy. Now, if thine eye  
Be sated with the view, haste to thy ships,  
And ply thine oars; for, if the Druids learn  
This bold intrusion, thou wilt find it hard  
To foil their fury.

## A U L U S D I D I U S.

*er.?* Prince, I did not moor—  
My light-arm'd shallops on this dangerous strand  
To sooth a fruitless curiosity :  
*d* I come in quest of proud Caractacus;  
Who, when our veterans put his troops to flight,  
Found refuge here.

## E L I D U R U S.

If here the Monarch rests,  
Presumptuous Chief! thou might'st as well essay  
To pluck him from yon stars : Earth's ample range  
Contains no surer refuge : underneath  
The soil we tread, a hundred secret paths,  
Scoop'd thro' the living rock in winding maze,  
Lead to as many caverns, dark, and deep:

32      C A R A C T A C U S.

In which the hoary sages act their rites  
Mysterious, rites of such strange potency,  
As, done in open day, would dim the sun,  
Tho' thron'd in noon-tide brightness. In such dens  
He may for life lie hid.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

We know the task.

Most difficult : yet has thy royal mother  
Furnish'd the means.

E L I D U R U S.

My mother say'st thou, Roman?

A U L U S D I D I U S.

In proof of that firm faith she lends to Rome,  
She gave you up her honour's hostages.

E L I D U R U S.

She did : and we submit.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

To Rome we bear you ;

From your dear country bear you ; from your joys,  
Your loves, your friendships, all your souls hold pre-  
cious.

E L I D U R U S.

And dost thou taunt us, Roman, with our fate?

A U L U S D I D I U S.

No, Youth, by heav'n, I would avert that fate.  
Wish ye for liberty?

V E L L I N U S, E L I D U R U S.

More than for life.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

And would do much to gain it?

C A R A C T A C U S. 33

V E L L I N U S.

Name the task.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

dens. The task is easy. Haste ye to these Druids:  
Tell them ye come, commission'd by your Queen,  
To seek the great Caractacus; and call  
His valour to her aid, against the Legions,  
Which, led by our Ostorius, now assail  
Her frontiers. The late treaty she has seal'd  
Is yet unknown: and this her royal signet,  
oman? Which more to mask our purpose was obtain'd,  
Shall be your pledge of faith. The eager king  
Will gladly take the charge; and, he consenting,  
What else remains, but to the Meinai's shore  
To lead his credulous step? there will we seize him:  
Bear him to Rome, the substitute for you,  
And give you back to freedom.

V E L L I N U S.

joys, If the Druids—

old pre- A U L U S D I D I U S.

te? If they, or he, prevent this artifice;  
Then force must take its way: then flaming brands,  
And biting axes, wielded by our soldiers,  
Must level these thick shades, and so unlodge  
The lurking savage.

E L I D U R U S.

S. Gods, shall Mona perish?

A U L U S D I D I U S.

princes, her ev'ry trunk shall on the ground  
Stretch its gigantic length; unless, ere dawn,

Ye lure this untam'd lion to our toils.

Go then, and prosper; I shall to the ships,

And there expect his coming. Youths, remember,

He must to Rome to grace great Caesar's triumph:

Caesar and Fate demand him at your hand.

[*Exeunt Aulus Didius and Romans*]

## ELIDURUS, VELLINUS.

### ELIDURUS.

And will heav'n suffer it? Will the just gods,  
That tread yon spangled pavement o'er our heads,  
Look from their sky and yield him? Will these Druids  
Their sage vicegerents, not call down the thunder;  
And will not instant its hot bolts be darted  
In such a righteous cause? Yes, good old king,  
Yes, last of Britons, thou art heav'n's own pledge;  
And shalt be such till death.

### VELLINUS.

What means my brother  
Dost thou refuse the charge?

### ELIDURUS.

Dost thou accept it?

### VELLINUS.

It gives us liberty.

### ELIDURUS.

It makes us traitors.

Gods, would Vellinus do a deed of baseness?

### VELLINUS.

Will Elidurus scorn the proffer'd boon.

# C A R A C T A C U S.

15

Of freedom?

E L I D U R U S.

Yes, when such its guilty price,  
Brother, I spurn it.

V E L L I N U S.

Go then, foolish boy!  
I'll do the deed myself.

E L I D U R U S.

It shall not be:  
I will proclaim the fraud.

V E L L I N U S.

Wilt thou? 'tis well.  
Hie to yon cave; call loudly on the Druid;  
and bid him drag to ignominious death  
the partner of thy blood. Yet hope not thou  
to 'scape; for thou didst join my impious steps:  
therefore his wrath shall curse thee: thou shalt live;  
yet shalt thou live an interdicted wretch,  
all rights of nature cancell'd.

E L I D U R U S.

O Vellinus!  
Spare not my soul: by heav'n thou know'st I love thee,  
as fervently as brother e'er lov'd brother:  
and, loving thee, I thought I lov'd mine honour.  
Oh! do not wake, dear youth, in this true breast,  
a fierce conflict.

V E L L I N U S.

Honour's voice commands  
thou should'st obey thy mother, and thy queen,  
Honour and Holiness alike conspire

76 C A R A C T A C U S.

To bid thee save these consecrated groves  
From Roman devastation.

E L I D U R U S.

Horrid thought!

Hence let us haste, ev'n to the furthest nook  
Of this wide isle; nor view the sacrilege.

V E L L I N U S.

No, let us stay, and by our prosperous art  
Prevent the sacrilege. Mark me, my brother,  
More years and more experience have matur'd  
My sober thought; I will convince thy youth,  
That this our deed has ev'ry honest sanction  
Cool reason may demand.

E L I D U R U S.

To Rome with reason?

Try if 'twill bring her deluging ambition  
Into the level course of right and justice:  
Try if 'twill tame these insolent invaders;  
Who thus, in savageness of conquest, claim  
Whom chance of war has spar'd. Do this, and prosper  
But, pray thee, do not reason from my soul  
Its inbred honesty: that holy flame,  
Howe'er eclips'd by Rome's black influence  
In vulgar minds, ought still to brighten ours.

V E L L I N U S.

Vain talker, leave me.

E L I D U R U S.

No, I will not leave thee!

I must not, dare not, in these perilous shades  
Think, if thy fraud should fail, these holy men,

How will their justice rend thy trait'rous limbs?  
 If thou succeed'st, the fiercer pangs of conscience,  
 How will they ever goad thy guilty soul?  
 Mercy, defend us! see, the awful Druids  
 Are issuing from their caves: hear'st thou yon signal?  
 Lo, on the instant all the mountain whitens  
 With slow-descending Bards. Retire, retire;  
 This is the hour of sacrifice: to stay  
 Is death.

VELLINUS.

I'll wait the closing of their rites  
 Yonder vale: do thou, as likes thee best,  
 Betray, or aid me.

ELIDURUS.

To betray thee, youth,  
 That love forbids; honour, alas! to aid thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

ENTER CHORUS.

SEMICHORUS.

Deep and Silence reign around;  
 Not a night-breeze wakes to blow;  
 Circle, sons, this holy ground;  
 Circle close, in triple row.  
 And, if mask'd in vapours drear,  
 No earth-born Spirit dare  
 Hover round this sacred space,  
 Nor with light spells the murky foe to chase.  
 Fit your boughs of vervain blue,  
 Not in cold September dew;



And dash the moisture chaste, and clear,  
 O'er the ground, and thro' the air.  
 Now the place is purg'd and pure.  
 Brethren! say, for this high hour  
 Are the milk-white steers prepar'd?  
 Whose necks the rude yoke never scar'd,  
 To the furrow yet unbroke?  
 For such must bleed beneath yon oak.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

Druid, these, in order meet,  
 Are all prepar'd.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

But tell me yet,

Cadwall! did thy step profound  
 Dive into the cavern deep,  
 Twice twelve fathom under ground,  
 Where our sage fore-fathers sleep?  
 Thence with reverence hast thou born,  
 From the consecrated chest,  
 The golden sickle, scrip, and vest,  
 Whilom by old Belinus worn?

## S E M I C H O R U S.

Druid, these, in order meet,  
 Are all prepar'd.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

But tell me yet,

From the grot of charms and spells,  
 Where our matron sister dwells,  
 Brennus! has thy holy hand  
 Safely brought the Druid wand;



And the potent adder-stone,  
 Gender'd 'fore th' autumnal moon?  
 When, in undulating twine,  
 The foaming snakes prolific join;  
 When they hiss, and when they bear  
 Their wond'rous egg aloof in air;  
 Thence, before to earth it fall,  
 The Druid, in his hallow'd pall,  
 Receives the prize;  
 And instant flies,  
 Follow'd by th' envenom'd brood,  
 Till he cross the crystal flood.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

Druid, these, in order meet,  
 Are all prepar'd.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

Then all's complete.

And now let nine of the selected band,  
 Whose greener years besit such station best,  
 With wary circuit pace around the grove:  
 And guard each inlet; watchful, lest the eye  
 Of busy curiosity profane  
 Try on our rites: which now must be as close  
 As done i'th' very central womb of earth.  
 Occasion claims it; for Caractacus  
 This night demands admission to our train.  
 He, once our king, while ought his power avail'd  
 To save his country from the rod of tyrants,  
 That duty past, does wisely now retire  
 To end his days in secrecy and peace;

Druid with Druids, in this chief of groves,  
 Ev'n in the heart of Mona. See, he comes!  
 How awful is his port! mark him, my friends!  
 He looks, as doth the tower, whose nodding walls,  
 After the conflict of heav'n's angry bolts,  
 Frown with a dignity unmark'd before,  
 Ev'n in its prime of strength. Health to the king!

C A R A C T A C U S, E V E L I N A, C H O R U S.

C A R A C T A C U S.

This holy place, methinks, doth this night wear  
 More than its wonted gloom: Druid, these groves  
 Have caught the dismal colouring of my soul,  
 Changing their dark dun garbs to very sable,  
 In pity to their guest. Hail, hallow'd oaks!  
 Hail, British born! who, last of British race,  
 Hold your primæval rights by nature's charter;  
 Not at the nod of Cæsar. Happy foresters,  
 Ye wave your bold heads in the liberal air;  
 Nor ask, for privilege, a prætor's edict.  
 Ye, with your tough and interwisted roots,  
 Grasp the firm rocks ye sprung from; and, erect  
 In knotty hardihood, still proudly spread  
 Your leafy banners 'gainst the tyrannous north,  
 Who Roman like assails you. Tell me, Druid,  
 Is it not better to be such as these,  
 Than be the thing I am?

C H O R U S.

To be the thing,

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Eternal wisdom wills, is ever best.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

! But I am lost to that predestin'd use  
 walls, Eternal wisdom will'd, and fitly therefore  
 May wish a change of being. I was born  
 A king; and Heav'n, who bade these warrior oaks  
 lift their green shields against the fiery sun,  
 To fence their subject plain, did mean, that I  
 should, with as firm an arm, protect my people  
 against the pestilent glare of Rome's ambition.  
 fail'd; and how I fail'd, thou know'st too well;  
 year does the babbling world: and therefore, Druid,  
 proves would be any thing save what I am.

## C H O R U S.

ce, to thy wish, the holy rites prepar'd,  
 Which, if heav'n frown not, consecrate thee Druid:  
 e to the altar's base the victims led,  
 er; from whose free-gushing blood ourself shall read  
 s high behests; which if assenting found,  
 these hands around thy chosen limbs shall wrap  
 he vest of sanctity; while at the act  
 on white-rob'd bards, sweeping their solemn harps,  
 ereat all lift their choral warblings to the skies,  
 and call the gods to witness. Mean while, Prince,  
 rth, think thee well, if ought on this vain earth  
 id, all holds too firm an union with thy soul,  
 stranging it from peace.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

I had a queen:  
 with my weakness, Druid! this tough breast

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Must heave a sigh, for she is unreveng'd.  
And can I taste true peace, she unreveng'd?  
So chaste, so lov'd a queen? ah, Evelina!  
Hang not thus weeping on the feeble arm  
That could not save thy mother.

E V E L I N A.

To hang thus

Softens the pang of grief; and the sweet thought,  
'That a fond father still supports his child,  
Sheds, on my pensive mind, such soothing balm,  
As doth the blessing of these pious seers,  
When meet they wish our welfare. Would to heav'  
A daughter's presence could as much avail,  
To ease her father's woes, as his doth mine.

C A R A C T A C U S:

Ever most gentle! come unto my bosom:  
Dear pattern of the precious prize I lost,  
Lost, so inglorious lost; my friends, these eyes  
Did see her torn from my defenceless camp;  
Whilst I, hemm'd round by squadrons, could not  
her:

My boy, still nearer to the darling pledge,  
Beheld her shrieking in the ruffian's arm;  
Beheld, and fled.

E V E L I N A.

Ah! Sir, forbear to wound

My brother's fame; he fled, but to recall  
His scatter'd forces to pursue and save her.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Daughter, he fled. Now, by yon gracious moon,

# C A R A C T A C U S.

23

That rising saw the deed, and instant hid  
Her blushing face in twilight's dusky veil,  
The flight was parricide.

EVELINA.

Indeed, indeed,  
I know him valiant; and not doubt he fell  
Mid slaughter'd thousands of the haughty foe,  
Victim to filial love. Arviragus,  
Thou hadst no sister near the bloody field,  
Whose sorrowing search, led by yon orb of night,  
Might find thy body; wash with tears thy wounds;  
And wipe them with her hair.

CHORUS:

Peace, virgin, peace:  
For thou, sad prince, reply; whate'er he is,  
Be he a captive, fugitive, or corse,  
He is what heav'n ordain'd: these holy groves  
Permit no exclamation 'gainst heav'n's will  
To violate their echoes: Patience, here,  
Her meek hands folded on her modest breast,  
In mute submission lifts th' adoring eye,  
Giv'n to the storm that wrecks her.

EVELINA.

Holy Druid,

I thought my erring tongue has said pollutes  
This sacred place, I from my soul abjure it.  
And will these lips bar with eternal silence,  
Rather than speak a word, or act a deed  
Unmeet for thy sage daughters; blessing first  
This hallow'd hour, that takes me from the world,

And joins me to their sober sisterhood.

## C H O R U S.

'Tis wisely said. See, Prince, this prudent maid,  
Now, while the ruddy flame of sparkling youth  
Glows on her beauteous cheek, can quit the world  
Without a sigh, whilst thou——

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Would save my queen

From a base ravisher; would wish to plunge  
This falchion in his breast, and so avenge  
Insulted royalty. O holy men!  
Ye are the sons of piety and peace;  
Ye never felt the sharp vindictive spur,  
That goads the injur'd warrior; the hot tide,  
That flushes crimson on the conscious cheek  
Of him, who burns for glory; else indeed  
Ye much would pity me: would curse the fate  
That coops me here inactive in your groves,  
Robs me of hope, tells me this trusty steel  
Must never cleave one Roman helm again;  
Never avenge my queen, nor free my country.

## C H O R U S.

'Tis heav'n's high will——

## C A R A C T A C U S.

I know it, reverend fathers!

'Tis heav'n's high will, that these poor aged eyes  
Shall never more behold that virtuous woman,  
To whom my youth was constant, 'twas heav'n's  
To take her from me at that very hour,  
When best her love might sooth me; that black

May memory ever raze it from her records)  
 Then all my squadrons fled, and left their king  
 aid, old and defenceless : him, who nine whole years  
 th had taught them how to conquer : Yes, my friends,  
 world for nine whole years against the sons of rapine  
 ed my veterans, oft to victory,  
 ever 'till then to shame. Bear with me, Druid,  
 y que be done : begin the rites.

## C H O R U S.

O would to heav'n  
 frame of mind, more fitted to these rites,  
 ssest thee, Prince ! that Resignation meek,  
 at dove-ey'd Peace, handmaid of Sanctity,  
 approach'd this altar with thee : 'stead of these,  
 e I not gaunt Revenge, ensanguin'd Slaughter,  
 and mad Ambition, clinging to thy soul,  
 te ger to snatch thee back to their domain,  
 ck to a vain and miserable world ;  
 ose misery, and vanity, tho' try'd,  
 ou still hold'st dearer than these solemn shades,  
 y. ere Quiet reigns with Virtue ? Try we yet  
 at Holiness can do ! for much it can :  
 ch is the potency of pious prayer :  
 d much the sacred influence convey'd  
 theirs ! sage mysterious office : when the soul,  
 l eyes tch'd by the power of music from her cell  
 an, fleshly thralldom, feels herself upborn  
 av'n's plumes of extasy, and boldly springs,  
 d swelling harmonies and pealing hymns,  
 lack h to the porch of heav'n. Strike, then, ye Bards !



Strike all your strings symphonious; wake a strain  
 May penetrate, may purge, may purify,  
 His yet unhallow'd bosom; call ye hither  
 The airy tribe, that on yon mountain dwell,  
 Ev'n on majestic Snowdon: they, who never  
 Deign visit mortal men, save on some cause  
 Of highest import, but, sublimely shrin'd  
 On its hoar top in domes of crystalline ice,  
 Hold converse with those spirits, that possess  
 The skies pure sapphire, nearest heav'n itself.

## O D E.

Mona on Snowdon calls:

Hear, thou King of mountains, hear;  
 Hark, she speaks from all her strings;  
 Hark, her loudest echo rings;

King of mountains, bend thine ear:  
 Send thy spirits, send them soon,  
 Now, when Midnight and the Moon  
 Meet upon thy front of snow:

See, their gold and ebon rod,

Where the sober sisters nod,

And greet in whispers sage and slow.

Snowdon mark! 'tis Magic's hour;

Now the matter'd spell hath pow'r;

Pow'r to rend thy ribs of rock,

And burst thy base with thunder's shock;

But to thee no ruder spell

Shall Mona use, than those that dwell



strain music's secret cells, and lie  
 ep'd in the stream of harmony.

Snowdon has heard the strain:  
 ark, amid the wond'ring grove  
 Other harpings answer clear,  
 Other voices meet our ear,  
 ions flutter, shadows move,  
 Busy murmurs hum around,  
 Rustling vestments brush the ground;  
 and, and round, and round they go,  
 Thro' the twilight, thro' the shade,  
 Mount the oak's majestic head,  
 d gild the tufted mistletoe.  
 fe, ye glittering race of light,  
 fe your wings, and check your flight:  
 e, arrang'd in order due,  
 ead your robes of saffron hue;  
 lo, with more than mortal fire,  
 ighty Mador finites the lyre:  
 k he sweeps the master-strings;  
 en all——

C H O R U S.

Take off; a fallen smoke involves the altar;  
 central oak doth shake; I hear the sound  
 steps profane: Caractacus, retire;  
 hence the victims; Mona is polluted.

S E M I C H O R U S.

er, as we did watch the eastern side,

We spied and instant seiz'd two stranger youths,  
 Who, in the bottom of a shadowy dell,  
 Held earnest converse : Britons do they seem,  
 And of Brigantian race.

## C H O R U S.

Haste, drag them hither.

VELLINUS, ELIDURUS, CHORUS

## E L I D U R U S.

O spare, ye sage and venerable Druids!  
 Your countrymen and sons.

## C H O R U S.

And are ye Britons?

Unheard of profanation : Rome herself,  
 Ev'n impious Rome, whom conquest makes more  
 pious,

Would not have dar'd so rashly. O! for words,  
 Big with the fiercest force of execration,  
 To blast the deed, and doers.

## E L I D U R U S.

Spare the curse,

Oh spare our youth!

## C H O R U S.

Is it not now the hour,  
 The holy hour, when to the cloudless height  
 Of yon star concave climbs the full-orb'd moon,  
 And to this nether world in solemn stillness  
 Gives sign, that to the list'ning ear of Heav'n  
 Religion's voice should plead ? The very babe

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 VOL. II.

shows this, and, chance awake, his little hands  
 lifts to the gods, and on his innocent couch  
 calls down a blessing. Shall your manly years  
 lead ignorance, and impiously presume  
 to tread, with vile unconsecrated feet,  
 on Mona's hallow'd plain? know, wretches, know,  
 at any hour such boldness is a crime,  
 that this 'tis sacrilege.

VELLINUS.

Were Mona's plain  
 more hallow'd still, hallow'd as is Heav'n's self,  
 the cause might plead our pardon.

ELIDURUS.

Mighty Druid!  
 true, we have rashly dar'd, yet forc'd by duty,  
 or sov'reign's mandate——

VELLINUS.

Eider by my birth,  
 other, I claim, in right of eldership,  
 to open our high embassy.

CHORUS.

Speak then;  
 let see thy words answer in honest weight  
 to this proud prelude. Youth! they must be weighty,  
 to atone for such a crime.

VELLINUS.

If then to give  
 new nerves to vanquish'd valour; if to do,  
 that, with the blessing of the Gods, may save  
 bleeding country from oppression's sword,

Be weighty business, know, on our commission,  
And on its hop'd success, that weight depends.

## C H O R U S.

Declare it then at once, briefly and boldly.

## V E L L I N U S.

Caractacus is here.

## C H O R U S.

Say'st thou, proud boy?

'Tis boldly said, and, grant 'twere truly said,  
Think'st thou he were not here from fraud or force  
As safe, as in a camp of conquerors?  
Here, youth, he would be guarded by the Gods;  
Their own high hostage; and each sacred hair  
Of his selected head, would in these caverns  
Sleep with the unsunn'd silver of the mine,  
As precious and as safe; record the time,  
When Mona e'er betray'd the hapless wretch,  
That made her groves his refuge.

## V E L L I N U S.

Holy Druid!

Think not so harshly of our enterprize.  
Can force, alas! dwell in our unarm'd hands?  
Can fraud in our young bosoms? No, dread seer,  
Our business told, I trust thou'lt soon disclaim  
The vain suspicion; and thy holy ear  
(Be brave Caractacus or here or absent)  
Shall instant learn it. From the north we come;  
The sons of her, whose heav'n-entrusted sway  
Blesses the bold Brigantes; men who firmly

# C A R A C T A C U S.

31

have three long moons withstood those Roman powers,  
Which, led by fell Ostorius, still assail  
our frontiers: yet so oft have our stout swords  
repell'd their hot assault, that now, like falcons,  
they hang suspended, loath to quit their prey,  
or daring yet to seize it. Such the state  
of us and Rome; in which our prudent mother,  
revolving what might best secure her country  
from this impending ruin, gave us charge  
to seek the great Caractacus, and call  
his valour to her aid, to lead her bands,  
to fight the cause of liberty and Britain,  
and quell these ravagers.

*[Caractacus starts from behind the altar.]*

C A R A C T A C U S, V E L L I N U S, E L I D U R U S,

C H O R U S.

C A R A C T A C U S.

And ye have found me;  
Tends, ye have found me: lead me to your Queen,  
and the last purple drop in these old veins  
shall fall for her and Britain.

C H O R U S.

Rash, rash Prince!

V E L L I N U S.

blest immortal powers! is this the man,  
more than man, who for nine bloody years  
withstood all Rome? He is; that warlike front,

Seam'd o'er with honest scars, proclaims he is :  
 Kneel, brother, kneel, while in his royal hand  
 We lodge the signet : this, in pledge of faith,  
 Great Cartismandua sends, and with it tells thee  
 She has a nobler pledge than this behind ;  
 Thy Queen——

C A R A C T A C U S.

Guideria!

V E L L I N U S.

Safely with our Mother

C A R A C T A C U S.

How, when, where rescu'd? mighty Gods, I thank  
 For it is true, this signet speaks it true.  
 O tell me briefly.

V E L L I N U S.

In a sally, Prince,

Which, wanting abler chiefs, my gracious mother  
 Committed to my charge, our troops assail'd  
 One outwork of the camp; the mask of night  
 Favour'd our arms, and there my happy hand  
 Was doom'd with other prisoners to release  
 The captive matron.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Let me clasp thee, youth

And thou shalt be my son : I had one, stranger,  
 Just of thy years; he look'd like thee right honest  
 Had just that freeborn boldness on his brow,  
 And yet he fail'd me. Were it not for him,  
 Who, as thou seest, ev'n at this hour of joy,  
 Draws tears down mine old cheek, I were as blest

is: the great gods. Oh, he has all disgrac'd  
and is high-born ancestry! But I'll forget him.  
h, haste, Evelina, barb my knotty spear,  
s thee and fast this trusty falchion to my thigh,  
y bow, my target——

C H O R U S.

Rash Caractacus!

What hast thou done? What dost thou mean to do?

C A R A C T A C U S.

My Mother save my country.

C H O R U S.

To betray thyself.

What hast thou done; the rest thou canst not do,  
Heav'n forbids; and of its awful will  
thy fury recks not: Has the bleeding victim  
pour'd a propitious stream? the milk-white steeds  
rein'd and neighing pranc'd with fav'ring steps?  
when these youths approach'd, did not a gust  
of livid smoke involve the hickering flame?  
did not the forest tremble? every omen  
warn'd thee to doubt their honesty of purpose;  
and yet, before their tongues could tell that purpose,  
I had tender'd, as our laws ordain,  
their test of faith, thy rudeness rush'd upon me,  
slandering my just rights.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Druid, methinks,

such a time, in such a cause, Reproof  
should not bate his sternness. Now, by Heav'n, I feel,  
and all omens, that within my breast,



Which marshals me to conquest; something here  
That snatches me beyond all mortal fears,  
Lifts me to where upon her jasper throne  
Sits flame-rob'd Victory, who calls me son,  
And crowns me with a palm, whose deathless green  
Shall bloom when Caesar's fades.

## C H O R U S.

Vain confidence!

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Yet I submit in all——

## C H O R U S.

'Tis meet thou should'st.

Thou art a King, a sov'reign o'er frail man;  
I am a Druid, servant of the Gods;  
Such service is above such sov'reignty,  
As well thou know'st: if they should prompt these  
To interdict the thing thou dar'st to do,  
What would avail thy daring?

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Holy man!

But thou wilt bless it; Heav'n will bid thee bless  
Thou know'st that, when we fight to save our count  
We fight the cause of Heav'n. The man that falls  
Falls hallow'd; falls a victim for the Gods;  
For them and for their altars.

## C H O R U S.

Valiant Prince!

Think not we lightly rate our country's weal,  
Or thee, our country's champion. Well we know  
The glorious meed of those exalted souls,



g here who flame like thee for freedom: mark me, Prince;  
 he time will come, when Destiny and Death;  
 eron'd in a burning car, the thund'ring wheels  
 m'd with gigantic scythes of adamant,  
 shall scour this field of life: and in the rear  
 he fiend Oblivion: kingdoms, empires, worlds  
 elt in the general blaze: when, lo, from high  
 ndraсте darting, catches from the wreck  
 he roll of fame, claps her ascending plumes,  
 nd stamps on orient stars each patriot name,  
 ound her eternal dome.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

ould'st. Speak ever thus,  
 and I will hear thee, 'till attention faint  
 heedless extasy.

## C H O R U S.

ot these! This tho' we know,  
 et man beware with headlong zeal to rush  
 here slaughter calls; it is not courage, Prince,  
 nor the pride and practis'd skill in arms,  
 e bless that gains this meed: the warrior is no patriot,  
 ar count we when, obsequious to the will of Heav'n,  
 that falls draws the sword of vengeance.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Surely, Druid,  
 ch fair occasion speaks the will of Heav'n—

## C H O R U S.

veal, monarch, perchance thou hast a fair occasion:  
 ve know it, if thou hast, the Gods will soon declare it:  
 heir sov'reign will thou know'st not; this to learn  
 demands our search. Ye mortals all retire!

Leave ye the grove to us and Inspiration;  
 Nor let a step, or ev'n one glance profane,  
 Steal from your caverns: stay, my holy brethren,  
 Ye time-ennobled Seers, whose rev'rend brows  
 Full eighty winters whiten; you, ye Bards,  
 Leoline, Cadwall, Hoel, Cantaber,  
 Attend upon our slumbers: Wond'rous men,  
 Ye, whose skill'd fingers know how best to lead,  
 Thro' all the maze of sound, the wayward step  
 Of Harmony, recalling oft, and oft  
 Permitting her unbridled course to rush  
 Thro' dissonance to concord, sweetest then  
 Ev'n when expected harshdest. Mador, thou  
 Alone shalt lift thy voice; no choral peal  
 Shall drown thy solemn warblings; thou best know  
 That opiate charm which lulls corporeal sense:  
 Thou hast the key, great Bard! that best can open  
 The portal of the soul; unlock it straight,  
 And lead the pensive pilgrim on her way,  
 Through the vast regions of futurity.

[*Exeunt Caractacus, Vellinus,*

# CHORUS.

## O D E.

Hail, thou harp of Phrygian frame!

In years of yore that Cantaber bore  
 From Troy's sepulchral flame;

With antient Brute, to Britain's shore  
 The mighty minstrel came:

Sublime upon the burnish'd prow,  
 He bad thy manly modes to flow;  
 I then heard the descant bold,  
 She flung her white arms o'er the sea;  
 Proud in her leafy bosom to enfold  
 The freight of harmony.  
 'Till then was ev'ry plain,  
 Save where the flood o'er mountains rude  
 Rumbled his tide amain:  
 And Echo from th' impending wood  
 Founded the hoarse strain;  
 While from the north the fullen gale  
 With hollow whistlings shook the vale;  
 Small notes, and answer'd soon  
 By savage howl the heaths among.  
 At that time the wolf doth bay the trembling moon,  
 And thin the bleating throng:  
 Thou spak'st, imperial Lyre,  
 The rough roar ceas'd, and airs from high  
 Left the land in extasy:  
 Fancy, the fairy, with thee came;  
 And Inspiration, bright-ey'd dame,  
 At thy call would leave her sapphire sky:  
 And, if not vain the verse presumes,  
 Now some chaste Divinity is near:  
 For lo! the sound of distant plumes  
 Beats thro' the pathless desert of the air.

'Tis not the flight of her;  
 'Tis sleep, her dewy harbinger;  
 Change, my harp, O change thy measures;  
 Cull, from thy mellifluous treasures,  
 Notes that steal on even feet,  
 Ever slow, yet never pausing,  
 Mixt with many a warble sweet,  
 In a ling'ring cadence closing,  
 While the pleas'd power sinks gently down the fl  
 And seals with hand of down the Druid's slumb'ry  
 eyes.  
 Thrice I pause, and thrice I sound  
 The central string, and now I ring  
 (By measur'd lore profound)  
 A sevenfold chime, and sweep, and swing  
 Above, below, around,  
 To mix thy music with the spheres,  
 That warble to immortal ears.  
 Inspiration hears the call;  
 She rises from her throne above,  
 And, sudden as the glancing meteors fall;  
 She comes, she fills the grove:  
 High her port; her waving hand  
 A pencil bears; the days, the years,  
 Arise at her command,  
 And each obedient colouring wears.  
 Lo, where Time's pictur'd band  
 In hues ethereal glide along;  
 O mark the transitory throng;

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Now they dazzle, now they die,  
Instant they flit from light to shade,  
Mark the blue forms of faint futurity,  
O mark them ere they fade.  
Whence was that inward groan?  
Why bursts thro' closed lids the tear?  
Why uplifts the bristling hair  
Its white and venerable shade?  
Why down the consecrated head  
Rises in chilly drops the dew of fear?  
All is not well, the pale-ey'd moon  
Stains her head in clouds, the stars retire,  
Save from the sultry south alone,  
The swart star flings his pestilential fire;  
Ev'n sleep herself will fly,  
If not recall'd by harmony.  
Hark, my lyre! thy softest numbers,  
As nurse extatic slumbers,  
Yet as tranquil virtue feels  
When the toil of life is ending,  
Lure from the earth the spirit steals,  
And, on new-born plumes ascending,  
Hies to lave in the bright fount of day,  
Destiny prepare a shrine of purer clay.

[The Druid waking, speaks.]

## C H O R U S.

May not be. Avaunt terrific axe;  
Why hangs thy bright edge glaring o'er the grove?  
Or a giant's nerve to ward the stroke!  
Now, it falls.

Where am I? hush, my soul!  
 'Twas all a dream. Resume no more the strain:  
 The hour is past: my brethren! what ye saw,  
 (If what ye saw, as by your looks, I read,  
 Bore like ill-omen'd shape) hold it in silence.  
 The midnight air falls chilly on my breast;  
 And now I shiver, now a fev'rish glow  
 Scorches my vitals. Hark, some step approaches,

EVELINA, CHORUS.

EVELINA.

Thus, with my wayward fears, to burst unbidden  
 On your dread synod, rousing, as ye seem,  
 From holy trance, appears a desperate deed,  
 Ev'n to the wretch who dares it.

CHORUS.

Virgin! quickly

Pronounce the cause.

EVELINA.

Bear with a simple ma

Too prone to fear, perchance my fears are vain.

CHORUS.

But yet declare them.

EVELINA.

I suspect me much

The faith of these Brigantes.

CHORUS.

Say'st thou, Virgin?

Heed what thou say'st; Suspicion is a guest

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VOL. II.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

41

that in the breast of man, of wrathful man,  
so oft' his welcome finds; yet seldom sure  
that submissive calm that smooths the mind  
of maiden innocence.

### E V E L I N A.

I know it well:

yet must I still distrust the eldest stranger:  
for while he talks, (and much the flatterer talks)  
his brother's silent carriage gives disproof  
of all his boast; indeed I mark'd it well;  
and, as my father with the elder held  
bold speech and warlike, as is still his wont  
when fir'd with hope of conquest, oft I saw  
him sigh unbidden heave the younger's breast,  
half-check'd as it was rais'd; sometimes, methought,  
his gentle eye would cast a glance on me,  
as if he pitied me; and then again  
he would fasten on my father, gazing there  
with veneration; then he'd sigh again,  
look on the ground, and hang his modest head  
most pensively.

### C H O R U S.

This may demand, my brethren,  
more serious search: Virgin! proceed.

### E V E L I N A.

'Tis true,

my father, rapt in high heroic zeal,  
his ev'ry thought big with his country's freedom,  
regards not the different carriage of these brethren,  
the elder takes him wholly; yet, methinks,

VOL. II.

E

§



The younger's manners have I know not what,  
 That speaks him far more artless. This besides,  
 Is it not strange, if, as the tale reports,  
 My mother sojourns with this distant Queen,  
 She should not send or to my sire, or me,  
 Some fond remembrance of her love? ah! none,  
 With tears I speak it, none, not her dear blessing  
 Has reach'd my longing ears.

## C H O R U S.

The Gods, my brethren  
 Have wak'd these doubts in the untainted breast  
 Of this mild maiden; oft to female softness,  
 Oft to the purity of virgin souls  
 Doth heav'n its voluntary light dispense,  
 When victims bleed in vain. They must be spies.  
 Hie thee, good Cantaber, and to our presence  
 Summon the young Brigantian.

## E V E L I N A.

Do not that,  
 Or, if ye do, yet treat him nothing sternly :  
 The softest terms from such a tender breast  
 Will draw confession, and, if ye shall find  
 The treason ye suspect, forbear to curse him.  
 (Not that my weakness means to guide your wisdom  
 Yet, as I think he would not wittingly  
 E'er do a deed of baseness, were it granted  
 That I might question him, my heart forbodes  
 It more could gain by gentleness and prayers,  
 Than will the fiercest threats.

C H O R U S.

Perchance it may :  
And quickly shalt thou try. But see the King!  
And with him both the youths.

E V E L I N A.

Alas! my fears  
Forewent my errand, else had I inform'd thee  
That therefore did I come, and from my father  
To gain admission. Mark the younger, Druid,  
How sad he seems; oft did he in the cave  
Fold his arms——

C H O R U S.

We mark him much, and much  
The elder's free and dreadless confidence.  
Virgin, retire awhile in yonder vale,  
Nor, 'till thy royal father quits the grove,  
Resume thy station here.

[Exit Evelina.]

C A R A C T A C U S, C H O R U S, V E L -  
L I N U S, E L I D U R U S.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Forgive me, Druid!  
My eager soul no longer could sustain  
The pangs of expectation; hence I sent  
The virgin innocence of Evelina,  
To break upon your privacy :  
She not return'd, O pardon! that uncall'd  
Follow : the great cause, I trust, absolves me :

## C A R A C T A C U S.

'Tis your's, 'tis freedom's, 'tis the cause of heav'n;  
And sure heav'n owns it such.

## C H O R U S.

Caractacus,

All that by sage and sanctimonious rites  
Might of the Gods be ask'd, we have essay'd,  
And yet, not to our wish, nor to their wont,  
Gave they benign assent.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Death to our hopes!

## C H O R U S.

While yet we lay in sacred slumber tranc'd,  
Sullen and sad to fancy's frightened eye  
Did shapes of dun and murky hue advance,  
In train tumultuous, all of gesture strange,  
And passing horrible; starting we wak'd,  
Yet felt no waking calm; still all was dark,  
Still rang our tinkling ears with screams of woe.  
Suspicious tremors still——

## V E L L I N U S.

Of what suspicious?

Druid, our Queen——

## C H O R U S.

Restrain thy wayward tongue  
Insolent youth! in such licentious mood  
To interrupt our speech ill suits thy years,  
And worse our sanctity.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

'Tis his distress

Makes him forget, what else his reverent zeal

Heav'n; Would pay ye holily. Think what he feels,  
 Poor youth! who fears yon moon, before she wanes,  
 May see his country conquer'd; see his mother  
 The victor's slave, her royal blood debas'd,  
 Dragging her chains thro' the throng'd streets of Rome,  
 To grace oppression's triumph. Horrid thought!  
 Oh, can it be that he, whose strenuous youth  
 Adds vigour to his virtue, e'er can bear  
 This patiently? he comes to ask my aid,  
 And, that withheld, (as now he needs must fear)  
 What means, alas! are left? search Britain round,  
 What chief dares cope with Rome? what king but holds  
 A loan of power at a Proconsul's will,  
 The best a scepter'd slave?

## V E L L I N U S.

Yes, Monarch, yes,  
 Heav'n restrains thy formidable sword,  
 To its stroke denies that just success  
 Which Heav'n alone can give. I fear me much  
 For Queen, ourselves, nay Britain's self, must perish.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Is it not this a fear makes Virtue vain?  
 Stars from yon ministring regents of the sky  
 Pluck'd from their right? Plucks from firm-handed Providence,  
 The golden reins of sublunary sway,  
 And gives them to blind Chance? If this be so,  
 Tyranny must lord it o'er the earth,  
 There's Anarchy in Heav'n. Nay, frown not, Druid,  
 Do not think 'tis thus.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

## C H O R U S.

We trust thou do'st not.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Masters of Wisdom! No: my soul confides  
In that all-healing and all-forming Power,  
Who, on the radiant day when Time was born,  
Cast his broad eye upon the wild of ocean,  
And calm'd it with a glance: then, plunging deep  
His mighty arm, pluck'd from its dark domain  
This throne of Freedom, lifted it to light,  
Girt it with silver cliffs, and call'd it Britain;  
He did, and will preserve it.

## C H O R U S.

Pious Prince,

In that all-healing and all-forming Power  
Still let thy soul confide; but not in men,  
No, not in these, ingenuous as they seem,  
'Till they are try'd by that high test of faith  
Our antient laws ordain.

## V E L L I N U S.

Illustrious Seer,

Me thinks our Sov'reign's signet well might plead  
Her envoy's faith. Thy pardon, mighty Druid,  
Not for ourselves, but for our Queen we plead;  
Mistrusting us, we wound her honour.

## C H O R U S.

Peace;

Our will admits no parley. Thither, Youths,  
Turn your astonish'd eyes; behold yon huge  
And unhewn sphere of living adamant,

# C A R A C T A C U S.

47

Which, pois'd by magic, rests its central weight  
 on yonder pointed rock, firm as it seems,  
 such is its strange and virtuous property,  
 it moves obsequious to the gentlest touch  
 of him, whose breast is pure; but to a traitor,  
 tho' even a giant's prowess nerv'd his arm,  
 it stands as fixt as Snowden. No reply;  
 The Gods command that one of you must now  
 approach and try it: in your snowy vests,  
 ye Priests, involve the lots, and to the younger,  
 as is our wont, tender the choice of Fate.

E L I D U R U S.

Heav'n's! is it fall'n on me?

C H O R U S.

Young Prince, it is;  
 prepare thee for thy trial.

E L I D U R U S.

Gracious Gods!  
 Who may look up to your tremendous thrones,  
 and say his breast is pure? All-searching Powers,  
 ye know already how and what I am;  
 and what ye mean to publish me in Mona,  
 so that I yield and tremble.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Rouse thee, Youth!  
 and, with that courage honest Truth supplies,  
 (for sure ye both are true) haste to the trial;  
 behold I lead thee on.

C H O R U S.

Prince, we arrest

Thy hasty step; to witness this high test  
 Pertains to us alone. Awhile retire,  
 And in yon cave his brother be thy charge;  
 The trial past, again we will confer,  
 Touching that part which Heav'n's deciding choice  
 Wills thee to act.

[*Exeunt Caractacus and Vellinus*]

### CHORUS, ELIDURUS.

#### CHORUS.

Now be the rites prepar'd:  
 And now, ye Bards, chaunt ye that custom'd hymn  
 The prelude of this fam'd solemnity.

#### O D E.

Thou Spirit pure, that spread'st unseen  
 Thy pinions o'er this pond'rous sphere,  
 And, breathing thro' each rigid vein,  
 Fill'st with stupendous life the marble mass,  
 And bid'st it bow upon its base,

When sov'reign Truth is near;  
 Spirit invisible! to thee  
 We swell the solemn harmony;

Hear us, and aid:  
 Thou, that in Virtue's cause  
 O'er-rulest Nature's laws,  
 O hear, and aid with influence high  
 The sons of Peace and Piety.



# C A R A C T A C U S.

49

first-born of that ethereal tribe  
 call'd into birth ere time or place,  
 Whom wave nor wind can circumscribe,  
 heirs of the liquid liberty of Light,  
 choice That float on rainbow pennons bright  
 Thro' all the wilds of space,  
 Vellin' et thou alone of all thy kind  
 can'st range the regions of the mind,  
 S. Thou only know'st  
 That dark meandring maze,  
 where wayward Falshood strays,  
 and, seizing swift the lurking sprite,  
 ar'd: forces her forth to shame and light.  
 d' hym

Thou can'st enter the dark cell  
 where the vulture Conscience slumbers,  
 And, unarm'd by charming spell,  
 Or magic numbers,  
 can'st rouse her from her formidable sleep,  
 and bid her dart her raging talons deep;  
 Yet, ah! too seldom doth the furious fiend  
 by bidding wait; vindictive, self prepar'd,  
 She knows her torturing time; too sure to rend  
 the trembling heart, when Virtue quits her guard.

Pause then, celestial guest!  
 And, brooding on thine adamantine sphere,  
 If fraud approach, Spirit, that fraud declare;  
 Conscience and to Mona leave the rest.

## C H O R U S.

ar'd'st thou the awful invocation, Youth,

Wrapt in those holy harpings?

E L I D U R U S.

Sage, I did;

And it came o'er my soul as doth the thunder,  
While distant yet, with an expected burst,  
It threatens the trembling ear. Now to the trial.

C H O R U S.

Ere that, bethink thee well what rig'rous doom  
Attends thine act, if failing, certain death :  
So certain, that in our absolving tongues  
Rests not that power may save thee : Thou must

EVELINA, ELIDURUS, CHORUS

EVELINA.

Die, say'st thou? Druid!

E L I D U R U S.

Evelina here!

Lead to the rock.

C H O R U S.

No, Youth, awhile we spare thee  
And, in our stead, permit this royal maiden  
To urge thee first with virgin gentleness;  
Respect our clemency, and meet her questions  
With answers prompt and true; so may'st thou  
A sterner trial.

E L I D U R U S.

Rather to the rock.—

EVELINA.

Dost thou disdain me, Prince? Lost as I am,

thinks the daughter of Caractacus  
 ought merit milder treatment: I was born  
 royal hopes and promise, nurs'd i' th' lap  
 of soft prosperity; alas the change!  
 meant but to address a few brief words  
 to this young Prince, and he doth turn his eye,  
 and scorns to answer me.

E L I D U R U S.

Scorn thee, sweet Maid?

'tis the fear——

E V E L I N A.

And canst thou fear me, Youth?

When while I led a life of royalty,  
 bore myself to all with meek deportment,  
 nothing harsh, or cruel: and, howe'er  
 misfortune works upon the minds of men,  
 or some they say it turns to very stone)  
 when I am sure it softens. Wert thou guilty,  
 should I should pity thee; nay, wert thou leagu'd  
 to load this suffering heart with more misfortunes,  
 should I should I pity thee; nor e'er believe  
 thou would'st, on free and voluntary choice,  
 betray the innocent.

E L I D U R U S.

Indeed I would not.

E V E L I N A.

O, gracious Youth; I do believe thou would'st not:  
 on thy brow the liberal hand of Heav'n  
 has portray'd Truth as visible and bold,  
 as were the pictur'd suns that deckt the brows.

Of our brave ancestors. Say then, young Prince,  
 (For therefore have I wish'd to question thee)  
 Bring ye no token of a mother's fondness  
 To her expecting child? Gentle thou seem'st,  
 And sure that gentleness would prompt thine heart  
 To visit, and to sooth with courteous office,  
 Distress like her's. A captive and a queen  
 Has more than common claim for pity, Prince,  
 And ev'n the ills of venerable age  
 Were cause enough to move thy tender nature.  
 The tears o'ercharge thine eye. Alas, my fears!  
 Sickness or sore infirmity had seiz'd her,  
 Before thou left'st the palace, else her lips  
 Had to thy care entrusted some kind message,  
 And blest her hapless daughter by thy tongue.  
 Would she were here!

ELIDURUS.

Would Heav'n she were!

EVELINA.

Ah why?

ELIDURUS.

Because you wish it.

EVELINA.

Thanks, ingenuous Youth,  
 For this thy courtesy. Yet, if the Queen  
 Thy mother shines with such rare qualities,  
 As late thy brother boasted, she will calm  
 Her woes, and I shall clasp her aged knees  
 Again, in peace and liberty.—Alas!  
 He speaks not; all my fears are just.

# C A R A C T A C U S.

53

## E L I D U R U S.

What fears?

The Queen Guideria is not dead.

## E V E L I N A.

Not dead!

Is she in that happy state of freedom,  
Which we are taught to hope? Why sigh'st thou,  
Youth?

My years have yet been prosp'rous. Did thy father  
Ever lose a kingdom? Did captivity  
Ever seize thy shrieking mother? thou can'st go  
Yonder cave, and find thy brother safe:  
He is not lost, as mine is. Youth, thou sigh'st  
In vain; thou hast not sure such cause for sorrow;  
If thou hast, give me thy griefs, I pray thee;  
I have a heart can softly sympathize,  
And sympathy is soothing.

## E L I D U R U S.

O Gods! Gods!

Thy tears my soul. What shall I say?

## E V E L I N A.

Perchance,

All in this bad world must have their woes,  
You too hast thine; and may'st, like me, be wretched.  
Only amid the ruinous waste of war,  
And that wild havock, which those sons of blood  
Bring on our groaning country, some chaste maid,  
Whose tender soul was link'd by love to thine,  
Might fall the trembling prey to Roman rage,  
Even at the golden hour, when holy rites

Had seal'd your virtuous vows. If it were so,  
Indeed I pity her!

E L I D U R U S.

Not that : not that.

Never 'till now did beauty's matchless beam—  
But I am dumb.

E V E L I N A.

Why that dejected eye?

And why this silence? that some weighty grief  
O'erhangs thy soul, thy ev'ry look proclaims.  
Why then refuse it words? The heart, that bleeds  
From any stroke of fate or human wrongs,  
Loves to disclose itself, that list'ning pity  
May drop a healing tear upon the wound.  
'Tis only, when with inbred horror smote  
At some base act, or done, or to be done,  
That the recoiling soul, with conscious dread,  
Shrinks back into itself. But thou, good Youth—

E L I D U R U S.

Cease, royal maid! permit me to depart.—

E V E L I N A.

Yet hear me, stranger! Truth and Secrecy,  
'Tho' friends, are seldom necessary friends—

E L I D U R U S.

I go to try my truth—

E V E L I N A.

O! go not hence,

In wrath; think not, that I suspect thy virtue:

Yet ignorance may oft make virtue slide,

And if——

ELIDURUS.

In pity spare me.

EVELINA.

If thy brother——

ay, start not, do not turn thine eye from mine;  
 speak, I conjure thee, is his purpose honest?  
 know the guilty price, that barbarous Rome  
 sets on my father's head; and gold, vile gold,  
 as now a charm for Britons: Brib'd by this,  
 would he betray him—Yes, I see thou shudder'st  
 at the dire thought; yet not, as if 'twere strange;  
 as our fears were mutual. Ah, young stranger;  
 that open face scarce needs a tongue to utter  
 that works within. Come then, ingenuous Prince,  
 and instant make discovery to the Druid,  
 while yet 'tis not too late.

ELIDURUS.

Ah! what discover?

ay, whom must I betray?

EVELINA.

Thy brother.

ELIDURUS.

Ha!

EVELINA.

who is no brother, if his guilty soul  
 seems with such perfidy. O all ye stars!  
 can he be brother to a youth like thee,  
 who would betray an old and honour'd King,  
 that King his countryman, and one whose prowess  
 guarded Britain 'gainst th' assailing world?



Can he be brother to a youth like thee,  
 Who from a young, defenceless, innocent maid,  
 Would take that King her father? Make her suffer  
 All that an orphan suffers? More perchance:  
 The ruffian foe.—O tears, ye choke my utterance  
 Can he be brother to a youth like thee,  
 Who would defile his soul by such black deeds?  
 It cannot be—And yet, thou still art silent.  
 Turn, youth, and see me weep. Ah, see me kneel  
 I am of royal blood, not wont to kneel,  
 Yet will I kneel to thee. O save my father!  
 Save a distressful maiden from the force  
 Of barbarous men! Be thou a brother to me,  
 For mine alas! hah! [Sees Arviragus enter]

ARVIRAGUS, EVELINA, ELIDURUS,  
 CHORUS.

A R V I R A G U S.

Evelina, rise!

Know, maid, I ne'er will tamely see thee kneel,  
 Ev'n at the foot of Caesar.

E V E L I N A.

'Tis himself:

And he will prove my father's fears were false,  
 False, as his son is brave. Thou best of brothers,  
 Come to my arms. Where hast thou been, thou  
 derer?

How wer't thou sav'd? Indeed, Arviragus,  
 I never shed such tears, since thou wer't lost,

C A R A C T A C U S.

37

or these are tears of rapture.

A R V I R A G U S.

Evelina!

Why would I greet thee, as a brother ought:

What wherefore didst thou kneel?

E V E L I N A.

O! ask not now.

A R V I R A G U S.

Heav'n I must, and he must answer me,  
Whoe'er he be. What art thou, fullen stranger?

E L I D U R U S.

Briton.

A R V I R A G U S.

Brief and bold.

E V E L I N A.

Ah, spare the taunt:

Thy merits not thy wrath. Behold the Druids;

They advance: with holy reverence first

Thou must address their sanctity.

A R V I R A G U S.

I will.

But see, proud boy, thou dost not quit the grove,

Whill time allows us parley.

E L I D U R U S.

Prince, I mean not.

A R V I R A G U S.

Heav'n's sons, and sons of heav'n! Illustrious Druids!

Permit me to approach your sacred presence:

Such dire tidings—

## C A R A C T A C U S.

C H O R U S.

On thy peril, peace!  
 Thou stand'st accus'd, and by a father's voice,  
 Of crimes abhorr'd, of cowardice and flight;  
 And therefore may'st not in these sacred groves  
 Utter polluted accents. Quickly say,  
 Wherefore thou fled'st? For that base fact unclear  
 We hold no further converse.

A R V I R A G U S.

O ye Gods!

Am I the son of your Caractacus?  
 And could I fly?

C H O R U S.

Waste not or time or words:  
 But tell us why thou fled'st?

A R V I R A G U S.

I fled not, Druid!

By the great Gods I fled not! Save to stop  
 Our dastard troops, that basely turn'd their backs  
 I stopt, I rallied them, when lo a shaft  
 Of random cast did level me with earth,  
 Where pale and senseless, as the slain around me,  
 I lay 'till midnight: Then, as from long trance  
 Awoke, I crawl'd upon my feeble limbs  
 To a lone cottage, where a pitying hind  
 Lodg'd me, and nourish'd me. My strength repair'd  
 It boots not that I tell, what humble arts  
 Compell'd I us'd to screen me from the foe.  
 How now a peasant from a beggarly scrip  
 I sold cheap food to slaves, that nam'd the price,

or after gave it. Now a minstrel poor  
 With ill-tun'd harp, and uncouth descant shrill  
 ply'd a thriftless trade, and by such shifts  
 did win obscurity to shroud my name.  
 At length to other conquests in the north  
 Florius led his legions: Safer now,  
 yet not secure, I to some valiant chiefs,  
 Whom war had spar'd, discover'd what I was;  
 And with them plann'd, how surest we might draw  
 our scatter'd forces to some rocky fastness  
 rough Caernarvon, there to breathe in freedom,  
 not with brave incursion to oppress  
 the thinly-station'd foe. And soon our art  
 well avail'd, that now at Snowdon's foot  
 all twenty troops of hardy veterans wait  
 to call my fire their leader.

CHORUS.

Valiant youth—

EVELINA.

—is—I said he was a valiant youth,

—or has he sham'd his race.

CHORUS.

We do believe

thy modest tale: And may the righteous Gods

thus ever shed upon thy noble breast

secretion's cooling dew. When nurtur'd so,

men, only then, doth valour bloom mature.

ARVIRAGUS.

—vain is valour, howsoe'er it bloom:

price, void, the Gods frown on us. All my hopes

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Are blasted; I shall ne'er rejoin my friends,  
 Ne'er bless them with my father. Holy men,  
 I have a tale to tell, will shake your souls.  
 Your Mona is invaded; Rome approaches,  
 Ev'n to these groves approaches.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

Horror! horror!

## A R V I R A G U S.

Hate as I landed on yon highest beach,  
 Where nodding from the rocks the poplars fling  
 Their scatter'd arms, and dash them in the wave,  
 There were their vessels moor'd, as if they sought  
 Concealment in the shade, and as I pass'd  
 Up yon thick-planted ridge, I 'spy'd their helms  
 'Mid brakes and boughs trench'd in the heath below  
 Where like a nest of night-worms did they glitter,  
 Sprinkling the plain with brightness. On I sped  
 With silent step, yet oft did pass so near,  
 'Twas next to prodigy, I 'scap'd unseen.

## C H O R U S.

Their number, Prince?

## A R V I R A G U S.

Few, if mine hasty eye  
 Did find, and count them all.

## C H O R U S.

O brethren, brethren  
 Treason and sacrilege, worse foes than Rome,  
 Have led Rome hither. Instant seize that wretch,  
 And bring him to our presence.

C A R A C T A C U S.

61

CHORUS, ELIDURUS, ARVIRAGUS.

CHORUS.

Say, thou false one!  
What doom befits the slave, who sells his country?

ELIDURUS.

Death, sudden death!

CHORUS.

No, ling'ring piece-meal death;  
Led to such death thy brother and thyself  
We now devote. Villain, thy deeds are known;  
It is known, ye led the impious Romans hither  
To slaughter us ev'n on our holy altars.

ELIDURUS.

What on my soul doth lie some secret grief,  
These looks perforce will tell: It is not fear,  
Nor aids, it is not fear that shakes me thus;  
The great Gods know, it is not: Ye can never  
Tear, what tho' wisdom lifts ye next those gods,  
Cannot, like to them, unlock men's breasts,  
And read their inmost thoughts. Ah! that ye could.

ARVIRAGUS.

What hast thou done?

ELIDURUS.

What, Prince, I will not tell.

CHORUS.

Fetch, there are means—

ELIDURUS.

I know, and terrible means;

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ELIDURUS.

What, Prince, I will not tell.

CHORUS.

Fetch, there are means—

ELIDURUS.

I know, and terrible means;

And 'tis both fit, that you should try those means,  
And I endure them: Yet I think, my patience  
Will for some space baffle your torturing fury.

## C H O R U S.

Be that best known, when our inflicted goads  
Harrow thy flesh!

## A R V I R A G U S.

Stranger, ere this is try'd  
Confess the whole of thy black perfidy;  
So black, that when I look upon thy youth,  
Read thy mild eye, and mark thy modest brow,  
I think indeed, thou durst not.

## E L I D U R U S.

Such a crime  
Indeed I durst not; and would rather be  
The very wretch thou seest. I'll speak no more.

## C H O R U S.

Brethren, 'tis so. The virgin's thoughts were just:  
This youth has been deceiv'd.

## E L I D U R U S.

Yes, one word more  
You say, the Romans have invaded Mona.  
Give me a sword and twenty honest Britons;  
And I will quell those Romans. Vain demand!  
Alas! you cannot: Ye are men of peace:  
Religion's self forbids. Lead then to torture.

## A R V I R A G U S.

Now on my soul this youth doth move me much.

## C H O R U S.

Think not Religion and our holy office

both teach us tamely, like the bleating lamb,  
to crouch before oppression, and with neck  
stretch'd await the stroke. Mistaken boy!  
did not strict justice claim thee for her victim,  
we might full safely send thee to these Romans,  
withing their hot charge. Know, when I blow  
that sacred trumpet bound with fable fillets  
yonder branching oak, the awful sound  
calls forth a thousand Britons train'd alike  
in holy and in martial exercise,  
not by such mode and rule, as Romans use,  
but of that fierce portentous horrible sort,  
which shall appal ev'n Romans.

E L I D U R U S.

Gracious gods!  
when there are hopes indeed. O call them instant,  
this Prince will lead them on : I'll follow him,  
who in my chains, and some way dash them round  
to harm the haughty foe.

A R V I R A G U S.

A thousand Britons,  
and arm'd! O instant blow the sacred trump,  
and let me head them. Yet methinks this youth—

C H O R U S.

Now what thou would'st say, might join thee, Prince,  
were he free from crime, or had confess'd.

E L I D U R U S.

Confest. Ah, think not, I will e'er—

A R V I R A G U S.

Reflect.

Either thyself or brother must have wrong'd us:  
Then why conceal——

## E L I D U R U S.

Hast thou a brother? no!  
Else hadst thou spar'd the word; and yet a sister  
Lovely as thine might more than teach thee, Prince  
What 'tis to have a brother. Hear me, Druids,  
Tho' I would prize an hour of freedom now  
Before an age of any after date:  
Tho' I would seize it as the gift of heav'n,  
And use it as heav'n's gift: yet do not think,  
I so will purchase it. Give it me freely,  
I yet will spurn the boon, and hug my chains,  
'Till you do swear by your own hoary heads,  
My brother shall be safe.

## C H O R U S.

Excellent youth!  
Thy words do speak thy soul, and such a soul,  
As wakes our wonder. Thou art free; thy brother  
Shall be thine honour's pledge! so will we use him  
As thou art false or true.

## E L I D U R U S.

I talk no other.

## A R V I R A G U S.

Thus then, my fellow-soldier, to thy clasp  
I give the hand of friendship. Noble youth,  
We'll speed, or die together.

## C H O R U S.

Hear us, Prince!  
Mona permits not, that he fight her battles,

will duly p  
ook up un  
it is lustra  
here is a n  
gross cor  
av'n's pur  
vapour w  
pois' nous  
no ev'n co  
much pur  
ap'd from  
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Priests, co  
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CARACTA

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ld strike us  
prithe, pea  
could excu  
t me, I'd gi  
GL. II.

# C A R A C T A C U S.

75

ill duly purified: For tho' his soul  
 took up unwittingly this deed of baseness,  
 it is lustration meet. Learn, that in vice  
 there is a noisome rankness unperceiv'd  
 gross corporeal sense, which so offends  
 heav'n's pure divinities, as us the stench  
 vapour wafted from sulphureous pool,  
 pois'nous weed obscene. Hence doth the man,  
 who ev'n converses with a villain, need  
 much purgation, as the pallid wretch  
 ap'd from the walls, where frowning pestilence  
 reads wide her livid banners. For this cause,  
 Priests, conduct the youth to yonder grove,  
 and do the needful rites. Mean while ourself  
 will lead thee, Prince, unto thy father's presence.  
 Hold, the King comes forth.

*[Exeunt Priests with Elidurus.]*

C A R A C T A C U S, A R V I R A G U S, C H O R U S,  
 E V E L I N A.

# C A R A C T I A C U S.

My son, my son!

at joy, what transport, doth thine aged sire  
 in these filial foldings! Speak not, boy,  
 interrupt that heart-felt extacy  
 would strike us mute. I know what thou wouldst say,  
 prithee, peace. Thy sister's voice hath clear'd thee,  
 could excuse find words at this blest moment,  
 I'd give it vent. But, 'tis enough,

GL. II.

G

§

Thy father welcomes thee to him and honour :  
 Honour, that now with rapt'rous certainty  
 Calls thee his own true offspring. Dost thou weep?  
 Ah, if thy tears swell not from joy's free spring,  
 I beg thee, spare them : I have done thee wrong,  
 Can make thee no atonement : None, alas !  
 Thy father scarce can bless thee, as he ought ;  
 Unblest himself, beset with foes around,  
 Bereft of queen, of kingdom, and of soldiers,  
 He can but give thee portion of his dangers,  
 Perchance and of his chains : Yet droop not, boy,  
 Virtue is still thine own.

## A R V I R A G U S.

It is, my father ;  
 Pure as from thine illustrious fount it came ;  
 And that un sullied : Let the world oppress us ;  
 Let fraud and falshood rivet fetters on us ;  
 Still shall our souls be free : Yet hope is ours,  
 As well as virtue.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Spoken like a Briton.

True, hope is'ours, and therefore let's prepare :  
 The moments now are precious. Tell us, Druid,  
 Is it not meet, we see the bands drawn out,  
 And mark their due array ?

## C H O R U S.

Monarch, ev'n now

They skirt the grove.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Then let us to their front-

# C A R A C T A C U S.

67

## C H O R U S.

What is the traitor-youth in safety lodg'd?

## C A R A C T A C U S.

He fled, he fled——

## C H O R U S.

O fatal flight to Mona!

## C A R A C T A C U S.

What of that? Arviragus is here,  
My son is here, let then the traitor go,  
For this he has join'd the Romans: Let him join them,  
With single arm, and that a villain's arm,  
Can lend but little aid to any powers  
Oppos'd to truth and virtue. Come, my son,  
Go to the troops, and marshal them with speed.  
That done, we from these venerable men  
Will claim their ready blessing: Then to battle;  
And the swift sun ev'n at his purple dawn  
Shall spy us crown'd with conquest, or with death.

[*Exeunt Caractacus, and Arviragus.*]

## C H O R U S, E V E L I N A.

## C H O R U S.

What may his flight portend! Say, Evelina,  
How came this youth to 'scape?

## E V E L I N A.

And that to tell

Will fix much blame on my impatient folly:  
For ere your hallow'd lips had given permission,  
I flew with eager haste to bear my father

News of his son's return. Inflam'd with that,  
 Think, how a sister's zealous breast must glow!  
 Your looks give mild assent. I glow'd indeed  
 With the dear tale, and sped me in his ear  
 To pour the precious tidings: But my tongue  
 Scarce nam'd Arviragus, ere the false stranger  
 (As I bethink me since) with stealthy pace  
 Fle'd to the cavern's mouth.

## C H O R U S.

The king pursued?

## E V E L I N A.

Alas! he mark'd him not, for 'twas the moment,  
 When he had all to ask and all to fear,  
 Touching my brother's valour. Hitherto  
 His safety only, which but little mov'd him,  
 Had reach'd his ears: But when my tongue unfold'd  
 The story of his bravery and his peril,  
 O how the tears cours'd plenteous down his cheeks  
 How did he lift unto the heav'ns his hands  
 In speechless transport! Yet he soon bethought him  
 Of Rome's invasion, and with fiery glance  
 Survey'd the cavern round; then snatch'd his spear  
 And menac'd to pursue the flying traitor:  
 But I with prayers (O pardon if they err'd)  
 Withheld his step, for to the left the youth  
 Had wing'd his way, where the thick underwood  
 Afforded sure retreat. Besides, if found,  
 Was age a match for youth?

## C H O R U S.

Maiden, enough,



# C A R A C T A C U S.

69

better perchance for us, if he was captive :  
 but in the justice of their cause, and heav'n,  
 Do Mona's sons confide.

BARD, CHORUS, ELIDURUS, EVELINA.

B A R D.

Druid, the rites  
 are finish'd, all save that which crowns the rest,  
 and which pertains to thy blest hand alone :  
 or that he kneels before thee.

C H O R U S.

'Take him hence,  
 We may not trust him forth to fight our cause.

E L I D U R U S.

Now by Andraсте's throne——

C H O R U S.

Nay, swear not, youth,  
 the tie is broke, that held thy fealty :  
 thy brother's fled.

E L I D U R U S.

Fled!

C H O R U S.

To the Romans fled,  
 es, thou hast cause to tremble.

E L I D U R U S.

Ah, Vellinus!

Does thus our love, does thus our friendship end!  
 As I thy brother, youth, and has thou left me!  
 es; and how left me, cruel, as thou art,

The victim of thy crimes!

C H O R U S.

True, thou must die.

E L I D U R U S.

I pray ye then on your best mercy, fathers,  
It may be speedy. I would fain be dead,  
If this be life. Yet I must doubt ev'n that,  
For falshood of this strange stupendous sort  
Sets firm-ey'd reason on a gaze, mistrusting,  
That what she sees in palpable plain form,  
The stars in yon blue arch, these woods, these caverns  
Are all mere tricks of cozenage, nothing real,  
The vision of a vision. If he's fled,  
I ought to hate this brother.

C H O R U S.

Yet thou dost not.

E L I D U R U S.

But when astonishment will give me leave,  
Perchance I shall.—And yet he is my brother,  
And he was virtuous once. Yes, ye vile Romans,  
Yes, I must die, before my thirsty sword  
Drinks one rich drop of vengeance. Yet, ye robbers  
Yet will I curse you with my dying lips:  
'Twas you, that stole away my brother's virtue.

C H O R U S.

Now then prepare to die.

E L I D U R U S.

I am prepar'd.

Yet, since I cannot now (what most I wish'd)  
By manly prowess guard this lovely maid:

# C A R A C T A C U S.

71

Permit, that on your holiest earth I kneel,  
And pour one fervent prayer for her protection.  
Allow me this, for tho' you think me false,  
The Gods will hear me.

E V E L I N A.

I can hold no longer!

Druid, Druid, at thy feet I fall :  
Yes, I must plead (away with virgin-blushes)  
For such a youth must plead. I'll die to save him,  
Take my life, and let him fight for Mona.

C H O R U S.

Virgin, arise. His virtue hath redeem'd him,  
And he shall fight for thee and for his country.  
Youth, thank us with thy deeds. The time is short,  
And now with reverence take our high lustration :  
Thrice do we sprinkle thee with day-break dew  
Hook from the May-thorn blossom; twice and thrice  
Touch we thy forehead with our holy wand :  
Now thou art fully purg'd. Now rise restor'd  
To virtue and to us. Hence then, my son,  
Lie thee to yonder altar, where our Bards  
Shall arm thee duly both with helm and sword  
For warlike enterprise. *[Exit Elidurus.]*

C A R A C T A C U S, C H O R U S, A R V I R A G U S,  
E V E L I N A.

C A R A C T A C U S.

'Tis true, my son,  
Gold are their bearings, and I fear me not

But they have hearts will not belie their looks.  
 I like them well. Yet would to righteous heav'n  
 Those valiant veterans, that on Snowdon guard  
 Their scanty pittance of bleak liberty,  
 Were here to join them; we would teach these wolve  
 Tho' we permit their rage to prowl our coasts,  
 That vengeance waits them ere they rob our altars.  
 Hail, Druid, hail! we find thy valiant guards  
 Accounted so, as well bespeaks the wisdom  
 That fram'd their phalanx. We but wait thy blessing  
 To lead them 'gainst the foe.

## C H O R U S.

Caractacus!

Behold this sword: The sword of old Belinus,  
 Stain'd with the blood of giants, and its name  
 Trifingus. Many an age its charmed blade  
 Has slept within yon consecrated trunk.  
 Lo, I unsheath it, King; I wave it o'er thee;  
 Mark, what portentous streams of scarlet light  
 Flow from the brandish'd falchion. On thy knee  
 Receive the sacred pledge.—And mark our words  
 By the bright circle of the golden sun,  
 By the brief courses of the errant moon,  
 By the dread potency of every star  
 That studs the mystic zodiac's burning girth,  
 By each, and all of these supernal signs,  
 We do adjure thee with this trusty blade,  
 To guard yon central oak, whose holiest stem  
 Involves the spirit of high Taranis:  
 This be thy charge; to which in aid we join

# C A R A C T A C U S.

79

ourselves, and our sage brethren. With our vassals  
thy son and the Brigantian prince shall make  
incursion on the foe.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

In this, and all,

ours observance meet. Yet surely, Druid,  
the fresh and active vigour of these youths  
might better suit with this important charge.  
Not that my heart shrinks at the glorious task,  
but will with ready zeal pour forth its blood  
upon the sacred roots, my firmest courage  
might fail to save. Yet, Fathers, I am old;  
and if I fell the foremost in the onset,  
should leave a son behind, might still defend you.

## C H O R U S.

the sacred adjuration we have utter'd  
may never be recall'd.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Then be it so.

do not think, I counsel this thro' fear :  
as I am, I trust with half our powers  
could drive back these Romans to their ships ;  
standards, that come as doth the cowering fowler  
to tangle me with snares and take me tamely ;  
yes, they shall find, that ere they gain their prey,  
they have to hunt it boldly with barb'd spears,  
and meet such conflict, as the chased boar  
gives to his stout assailants. O ye Gods !  
that I might instant face them.

Be thy son's

The onset.

A R V I R A G U S.

From his soul that son doth thank ye,  
 Blessing the wisdom, that preserves his father  
 Thus to the last. O if the fav'ring Gods  
 Direct this arm, if their high will permit  
 I pour a prosperous vengeance on the foe,  
 I ask for life no longer, than to crown  
 The valiant task. Steel then, ye powers of heav'n,  
 Steel my firm soul with your own fortitude,  
 Free from alloy of passion. Give me courage,  
 That knows not rage; revenge, that knows not  
 lice;

Let me not thirst for carnage, but for conquest:  
 And conquest gain'd, sleep vengeance in my breast  
 Ere in its sheath my sword.

C A R A C T A C U S.

O hear his father!

If ever rashness spur'd me on, great Gods,  
 To acts of danger thirsting for renown;  
 If e'er my eager soul pursu'd its course  
 Beyond just reason's limit, visit not  
 My faults on him. I am the thing you made me,  
 Vindictive; bold, precipitate, and fierce:  
 But as you gave to him a milder mind,  
 O bless him, bless him with a milder fate!

E V E L I N A.

Nor yet unheard let Evelina pour

her pray'rs and tears. O hear a hapless maid,  
 that ev'n thro' half the years her life has number'd,  
 ev'n nine long years has drag'd a trembling being,  
 beset with pains and perils. Give her peace;  
 and, to endear it more, be that blest peace  
 won by her brother's sword. O bless his arm,  
 and bless his valiant followers, One, and all.

E L I D U R U S *entering armed.*

Hear, heav'n! and let this pure and virgin pray'r  
 plead ev'n for Elidurus, whose sad soul  
 cannot look up to your immortal thrones,  
 and urge his own request: Else would he ask,  
 that all the dangers of th' approaching fight  
 might fall on him alone: That every spear  
 the Romans wield might at his breast be aim'd;  
 each arrow darted on his rattling helm;  
 that so the brother of this beauteous maid,  
 returning safe with victory and peace,  
 might bear them to her bosom.

C H O R U S.

Now rise all,  
 and heav'n, that knows, what most ye ought to ask,  
 grant all ye ought to have. Behold, the stars  
 are faded; universal darkness reigns.  
 Now is the dreadful hour, now will our torches  
 glare with more livid horror, now our shrieks  
 and clanking arms will more appall the foe.  
 Attend, ye Bards, that for the sign of onset  
 found the antientest of all your rhymes,  
 whose birth tradition notes not, nor who fram'd

Its lofty strains: The force of that high air  
 Did Julius feel, when, fir'd by it, our fathers  
 First drove him recreant to his ships; and ill  
 Had far'd his second landing, but that fate  
 Silenc'd the master Bard, who led the song.  
 Now forth, brave Pair! Go, with our blessing go;  
 Mute be the march, as ye ascend the hill:  
 Then, when ye hear the sound of our shrill trumpet  
 Fall on the foe.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Now glory be thy guide;  
 Pride of my soul, go forth and conquer.

## E V E L I N A.

Brother,

Yet ~~one~~ embrace. O thou much honour'd Stranger  
 I charge thee fight by my dear brother's side,  
 And shield him from the foe; for he is brave,  
 And will with bold and well-directed arm  
 Return thy succour.

[*Exeunt Arviragus and Elidur*]

## C H O R U S.

Now, ye Priest, with speed  
 Strew on the altar's height your sacred leaves,  
 And light the morning flame. But why is this?  
 Why doth our brother Mador snatch his harp  
 From yonder bough? Why this way bend his step?

## C A R A C T A C U S.

He is entranc'd. The fillet bursts, that bound  
 His liberal locks; his snowy vestments fall  
 In ampler folds; and all his floating form

oth seem  
 et is he sp  
 hat is the  
 hat thou w  
 ouldst scan  
 hy starts—  
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 at shook t  
 'Twas De  
 The Warr  
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 I saw his g  
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 me (he cry  
 lead you to  
 I come: Y  
 That cleave  
 scends to th  
 I mount you  
 proud steed  
 Hark! to m  
 k! to my\*cl  
 Here one of  
 Vol. II.



oth seem to glisten with divinity!  
 et is he speechless. Say, thou Chief of Bards,  
 hat is there in this airy vacancy,  
 hat thou with fiery and irregular glance  
 ouldst scan thus wildly? wherefore heaves thy breast?  
 hy starts——

## C H O R U S.

O D E.

ark! heard ye not yon footstep dread,  
 hat shook the earth with thund'ring tread?  
 'Twas Death,—In haste  
 The Warrior past;  
 gh tower'd his helmed head:  
 I mark'd his mail, I mark'd his shield,  
 py'd the sparkling of his spear,  
 I saw his giant arm the falchion wield;  
 de wav'd the bick'ring blade, and fir'd the angry air.

me (he cry'd) my Britons, wait,  
 lead you to the field of fate  
 I come: Yon car,  
 That cleaves the air,  
 scends to throne my state:  
 I mount your Champion and your God.  
 proud steeds neigh beneath the thong:  
 Hark! to my wheels of brass, that rattle loud!  
 k! to my \*clarion shrill, that brays the woods among!

---

Here one of the Druids blows the sacred trumpet.

Fear not now the fever's fire,

Fear not now the death-bed groan,

Pangs that torture, pains that tire,

Bed-rid age with feeble moan :

These domestic terrors wait

Hourly at my palace gate ;

And when o'er slothful realms my rod I wave,

These on the tyrant king and coward slave

Rush with vindictive rage, and drag them to their grave

But ye, my Sons, at this high hour

Shall share the fulness of my power :

From all your bows,

In level'd rows,

My own dread shafts shall shower.

Go then to conquest, gladly go,

Deal forth my dole of destiny,

With all my fury dash the trembling foe

Down to those darksome dens, where Rome's  
spectres lie.

Where creeps the ninefold stream profound

Her black inexorable round,

And on the bank,

To willows dank,

The shivering ghosts are bound.

Twelve thousand crescents all shall swell

To full-orb'd pride, and fading die,

Ere they again in life's gay mansions dwell :

Not such the meed that crowns the sons of Liber

# C A R A C T A C U S.

79

o, my Britons! battle-slain,  
Rapture gilds your parting hour:  
that all despotic reign,  
Claim but there a moment's power.  
Swiftly the soul of British flame  
animates some kindred frame,  
wave, Swiftly to life and light triumphant flies,  
Exults again in martial extasies,  
neighbour again for freedom fights, again for freedom dies.

# C A R A C T A C U S.

does, it does! unconquer'd, undismay'd,  
the British soul revives—Champion, lead on,  
follow—give me way. Some blessed shaft  
will rid me of this clog of cumbrous age;  
and I again shall in some happier mould  
live to redeem my country.

# C H O R U S.

Stay thee, Prince,  
and mark what clear and amber-skirted clouds  
rise from the altar's verge, and cleave the skies:  
'tis a prosperous omen! Soon expect  
to hear glad tidings.

# C A R A C T A C U S.

I will send them to thee.

# C H O R U S.

At see, a Bard approaches, and he bears them;  
He is his eye no herald to his heart.

BARD, CHORUS, CARACTACUS.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Speedily tell thy tale.

'B A R D.

A tale like mine,

I trust your ears will willingly pursue

Thro' each glad circumstance. First, Monarch, learn

The Roman troop is fled.

C H O R U S.

Great Gods, we thank ye

C A R A C T A C U S.

Fought they not ere they fled? O tell me all.

'B A R D.

Silent, as night, that wrapt us in her veil,

We pac'd up yonder hill, whose woody ridge

O'erhung the ambush'd foe. No sound was heard,

Step felt, or sight descry'd: for safely hid,

Beneath the purple pall of sacrifice

Did sleep our holy fire, nor saw the air,

'Till to that pass we came, where whilom Brute

Planted his five hoar altars. To our rites,

Then swift we hasted, and in one short moment

The rocky piles were cloth'd with livid flame.

Near each a white-rob'd Druid, whose stern voice

Thunder'd deep execrations on the foe.

Now wak'd our horrid symphony, now all

Our harps terrific rang: Meanwhile the grove

Trembled, the altars shook, and thro' our ranks

# C A R A C T A C U S.

31

our sacred sisters rush'd in sable robes,  
With hair dishevel'd, and funeral brands  
curl'd round with menacing fury. On they rush'd  
in fierce and frantic mood, as is their wont  
amid the magic rites, they do to Night  
in their deep dens below. Motions like these  
were never dar'd before in open air!

## C H O R U S.

Did I not say, we had a power within us,  
that might appall even Romans?

## B A R D.

And it did.  
They stood aghast, and to our vollied darts,  
that thick as hail fell on their helmets and corslets,  
scarce rais'd a warding shield. The sacred trumpet  
then rent the air, and instant at the signal  
rush'd down Arviragus with all our vassals;  
hot, but short-liv'd, conflict then ensu'd:  
or soon they fled. I saw the Romans fly,  
before I left the field.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

My son pursu'd!

## B A R D.

The Prince and Elidurus, like twin lions,  
did side by side engage. Death seem'd to guide  
their swords, no stroke fell fruitless, every wound  
gave him a victim.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Thus my friend Ebrancus  
fated prince! didst thou and I in youth.

H 2

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Unite our valours. In his prime he fell,  
On Conway's banks I saw him fall, and slew  
His murderer. But how far did they pursue?

B A R D.

Even to the ships: For I descry'd the rout,  
Far as the twilight gleam would aid my sight.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Now, thanks to the bright star that rul'd his birth  
Yes, he will soon return to claim my blessing,  
And he shall have it pour'd in tears of joy  
On his bold breast! methought I heard a step:  
Is it not his?

B A R D.

"Tis some of our own train,  
And as I think, they lead six Romans captive.

CHORUS, CARACTACUS, CAPTIVE

C H O R U S.

My brethren, bear the prisoners to the cavern,  
"Till we demand them.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Pause ye yet a while.

They seem of bold demeanor, and have helms,  
That speak them leaders. Hear me, Romans, hear  
That you are captives, is the chance of war:  
Yet captives as ye are, in Britain's eye  
Ye are not slaves. Barbarians, tho' ye call us,  
We know the native rights, man claims from man  
And therefore never shall we gall your necks.

With chains  
an arrogance  
y Rome (v  
er avarice,  
true, ye are  
orbirds, we  
Ye give you  
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VELIN  
upport me,  
ll is not we

With chains, or drag you at our scythed cars  
 In arrogance of triumph. Nor 'till taught  
 By Rome (what Britain sure should scorn to learn)  
 Her avarice, will we barter you for gold.  
 True, ye are captives, and our country's safety  
 Forbids, we give you back to liberty :  
 We give you therefore to the immortal Gods,  
 To them we lift you in the radiant cloud  
 Of sacrifice. They may in limbs of freedom  
 Replace your free-born souls, and their high mercy  
 Ample shall to some better world advance you ;  
 Or else in this restore that golden gift,  
 Which lost, leaves life a burden. Does there breathe  
 A wretch so pall'd with the vain fear of death  
 Can call this cruelty ? 'tis love, 'tis mercy,  
 And grant, ye Gods, if e'er I'm made a captive,  
 I meet the like fair treatment from the foe,  
 Those stronger star quells mine. Now lead them on,  
 And, while they live, treat them, as men should men,  
 And not as Rome treats Britain. [*Exeunt Captives.*]

Druid, these,

even should their chief escape, may to the Gods.

sacrifice—Whence was that shriek ?

EVELINA, CARACTACUS, CHORUS.

EVELINA.

My father,

support me, take me trembling to your arms ;

It is not well. Ah me, my fears o'ercome me !

What means my child?

E V E L I N A.

Alas! we are betray'd.

Even now as wand'ring in yon eastern grove  
I call'd the Gods to aid us, the dread sound  
Of many hasty steps did meet mine ear :  
This way they press.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Daughter, thy fears are vain.

E V E L I N A.

Methought I saw the flame of lighted brands,  
And what did glitter to my dazzled sight,  
Like swords and helms.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Alas, all the feeble coinage

Of maiden fear.

E V E L I N A.

Nay, if mine ear mistook not,  
I heard the traitor's voice, who that way 'scap'd,  
Calling to arms.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Away with idle terrors!

Know, thy brave brother's helm is crown'd with  
conquest,

Our Foes are fled, their leaders are our captives.  
Smile, my lov'd child, and imitate the sun,  
That rises ruddy from behind yon oaks  
To hail him victor.



# C A R A C T A C U S.

85

## C H O R U S.

That the rising sun!

horror! horror! sacrilegious fires

devour our groves: They blaze, they blaze! O sound

the trump again; recall the prince, or all

lost.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Druid, where is thy fortitude?

Do not I live? Is not this holy sword

firm in my grasp? I will preserve your groves.

Britons, I go: Let those that dare die nobly,

follow my step.

[Exit Caractacus.]

## E V E L I N A.

O whither does he go?

Return, return: Ye holy men, recall him.

What is his arm against a host of Romans?

I have lost a father!

## C H O R U S.

Ruthless Gods!

Take away our souls: A general panic

reigns thro' the grove. O fly, my brethren, fly,

to aid the king, fly to preserve your altars!

Alas! 'tis all in vain; our fate is fixt.

Look there, look there, thou miserable maid!

Behold thy bleeding brother.

ARVIRAGUS, ELIDURUS, EVELINA  
CHORUS.

ARVIRAGUS.

Thanks, good youth!

Safe hast thou brought me to that holy spot,  
Where I did wish to die. Support me still.  
O, I am sick to death. Yet one step more :  
Now lay me gently down. I would drag out  
This life, tho' at some cost of throbs and pangs,  
Just long enough to claim my father's blessing,  
And sigh my last breath in my sister's arms.—  
And here she kneels, poor maid! all dumb with grief  
Restrain thy sorrow, gentlest Evelina,  
True, thou dost see me bleed : I bleed to death.

EVELINA.

Say'st thou to death? O Gods! the barbed shaft  
Is buried in his breast. Yes, he must die;  
And I, alas! am doom'd to see him die.  
Where are your healing arts, medicinal herbs,  
Ye holy men, your wonder-working spells?  
Pluck me but out this shaft, stanch but this blood,  
And I will call down blessings on your heads  
With such a fervency—And can ye not!  
Then let me beg you on my bended knee,  
Give to my misery some opiate drug,  
May shut up all my senses.—Yes, good fathers,  
Mingle the potion so, that it may kill me  
Just at the instant, this poor languisher

leaves his last sigh.

A R V I R A G U S.

Talk not thus wildly, sister,  
think on our father's age——

E V E L I N A.

Alas! my brother!

We have no father now; or if we have,  
he is a captive.

A R V I R A G U S.

Captive! O my wound!

stings me now——But is it so? [*Turning to the Chorus.*]

C H O R U S.

Alas!

We know no more, save that he sallied single  
to meet the foe, whose unexpected host  
wound by the east had wound their fraudulent march,  
and fir'd our groves.

E L I D U R U S.

O fatal, fatal valour!

When is he seiz'd, or slain.

A R V I R A G U S.

Too sure he is!

ruin'd, not half the Romans met our swords;  
we found the fraud too late: the rest are yonder.

C H O R U S.

How could they gain the pass?

A R V I R A G U S.

The wretch, that fled  
that way, return'd, conducting half their powers;

And—But thy pardon, youth, I will not wound thee  
He is thy brother.

E L I D U R U S.

'Thus my honest sword  
Shall force the blood from the detested heart,  
That holds alliance with him.

A R V I R A G U S.

Elidurus,

Hold, on our friendship, hold, Thou noble youth,  
Look on this innocent maid. She must to Rome,  
Captive to Rome. Thou seest warm life flow from me  
Ere long she'll have no brother. Heaven's my witness  
I do not wish, that thou should'st live the slave  
Of Rome: But yet she is my sister.

E L I D U R U S.

Prince,

Thou urgest that, might make me drag an age  
In fetters worse than Roman. I will live,  
And while I live——

*Enter* B A R D.

Fly to your caverns, Druids,  
The grove's beset around. The chief approaches.

C H O R U S.

Let him approach, we will confront his pride,  
The Seer that rules amid the groves of Mona  
Has not to fear his fury. What though age  
Slackens our sinews; what tho' shield and sword  
Give not their iron aid to guard our body;  
Yet virtue arms our soul, and 'gainst that panoply

that 'vails

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# C A R A C T A C U S.

29

nd the hat 'vails the rage of robbers? Let him come.

## A R V I R A G U S.

aint apace.—Ye venerable men,  
ye can save this body from pollution,  
ye can tomb me in this sacred place,  
rust ye will. I fought to save these groves,  
nd, fruitless though I fought, some grateful oak,  
rust will spread its reverential gloom  
youth, er my pale ashes—Ah! that pang was death!  
ome, sister, Oh!——

[Dies.

## E L I D U R U S.

She faints! Ah raise her!——

## E V E L I N A.

Yes,

w he is dead. I felt his spirit go  
a cold sigh, and as it past, methought  
aus'd a while, and trembled on my lips!  
ke me not from him: Breathless as he is,  
is my brother still, and if the Gods  
please to grace him with some happier being,  
y ne'er can give to him a fonder sister.

## C H O R U S.

hren, surround the corse, and, ere the foe  
roaches, chaunt with meet solemnity  
t grateful dirge your dying champion claims.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

where incumbent o'er the shade  
e's ravening eagle bows her beaked head!  
while a moment fate affords,  
e yet a moment freedom stays,

ol. II.

I

§

That moment, which outweighs  
Eternity's unmeasur'd hoards,  
Shall Mona's grateful Bards employ  
To hymn their godlike Hero to the sky.

## S E M I C H O R U S.

Ring out, ye mortal strings;  
Answer thou heavenly harp, instinct with spirit all,  
That o'er the jasper arch self-warbling swings  
Of blest Andraсте's throne:  
Thy sacred sounds alone  
Can celebrate the fall  
Of bold Arviragus— [*Enter Aulus Didius and Roman*

AULUS DIDIUS, CHORUS, EVELINA  
ELIDURUS.

## AULUS DIDIUS.

Ye bloody priests,  
Behold we burst on your infernal rites,  
And bid you pause. Instant restore our soldiers,  
Nor hope that superstition's ruthless step  
Shall wade in Roman gore. Ye savage men,  
Did not our laws give license to all faiths,  
We would o'erturn your altars, headlong heave  
These shapeless symbols of your barbarous Gods,  
And let the golden sun into your caves.

## C H O R U S.

Servant of Caesar, has thine impious tongue  
Spent the black venom of its blasphemy?  
It has. Then take our curses on thine head,

C A R A C T A C U S.

91

Even his fell curses, who doth reign in Mona,  
Vicegerent of those Gods thy pride insults.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Bold priest, I scorn thy curses, and thyself.  
Soldiers, go search the caves, and free the prisoners—  
Take heed, ye seize Caractacus alive.

Arrest yon youth; load him with heaviest irons,  
He shall to Caesar answer for his crime.

E L I D U R U S.

I stand prepar'd to triumph in my crime.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

'Tis well, proud boy—Look to the beauteous maid,

*[To the soldiers.]*

That trac'd in grief, bends o'er yon bleeding corse,  
Respect her sorrows.

E V E L I N A.

Hence ye barbarous men,  
Ye shall not take him welt'ring thus in blood,  
To shew at Rome what British virtue was.  
Avaunt! The breathless body that ye touch  
Was once Arviragus!

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Fear us not, Princess,  
We reverence the dead.

C H O R U S.

Would too to heaven,  
Ye reverenc'd the Gods but even enough  
Not to debase with slavery's cruel chain,  
What they created free.

C A R A C T A C U S.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

The Romans fight

Not to enslave, but humanize the world.

C H O R U S.

Go to, we will not parley with thee, Roman :  
Instant pronounce our doom.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Hear it, and thank

This once our clemency shall spare your groves,

If at our call ye yield the British king :

Yet learn, when next ye aid the foes of Caesar,

That each old oak, whose solemn gloom ye boast,

Shall bow beneath our axes.

C H O R U S.

Be they blasted,

Whene'er their shade forgets to shelter virtue.

*Enter* B A R D.

Mourn, Mona, mourn. Caractacus is captive !

And dost thou smile, false Roman ? do not think

He fell an easy prey. Know, ere he yielded,

Thy bravest veterans bled. He too, thy spy,

The base Brigantian prince, hath seal'd his fraud

With death. Bursting thro' armed ranks, that hemm'd

The caitiff round, the brave Caractacus

Seiz'd his false throat ; and as he gave him death

Indignant thunder'd, ' Thus is my last stroke

' The stroke of justice.' Numbers then oppress him

I saw the slave, that cowardly behind

Pinion'd his arms ; I saw the sacred sword



# C A R A C T A C U S.

23

With'd from his grasp : I saw, what now ye see,  
 glorious sight ! those barbarous bonds upon him.

C A R A C T A C U S, A U L U S D I D I U S,  
 C H O R U S, &c.

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Romans, methinks the malice of your tyrant  
 might furnish heavier chains. Old as I am,  
 and wither'd as you see these war-worn limbs,  
 trust me, they shall support the weightiest load  
 justice dares impose.——

Proud-crested foldier ! [*To Didius.*]

Who seem'st the master-mover in this business,  
 say, dost thou read less terror on my brow,  
 than when thou met'st me in the fields of war  
 leading my nations ? No, my free-born soul  
 has scorn still left to sparkle thro' these eyes,  
 and frown defiance on thee.—Is it thus !

[*Seeing his son's body.*]

Then I'm indeed a captive. Mighty Gods !  
 my soul, my soul submits : Patient it bears  
 the pond'rous load of grief ye heap upon it.  
 Yes, it will grovel in this shatter'd breast,  
 and be the sad tame thing, it ought to be  
 coopt in a servile body.

## A U L U S D I D I U S.

Droop not, King.

When Claudius, the great master of the world,

Shall hear the noble story of thy valour,  
His pity——

C A R A C T A C U S.

Can a Roman pity, soldier?

And if he can, Gods! must a Briton bear it?

Arviragus, my bold, my breathless boy,  
Thou hast escap'd such pity; thou art free.

Here in high Mona shall thy noble limbs  
Rest in a noble grave; posterity  
Shall to thy tomb with annual reverence bring  
Sepulchral stones, and pile them to the clouds:  
Whilst mine——

A U L U S D I D I U S.

The morn doth hasten our departure.  
Prepare thee, King, to go: A fav'ring gale  
Now swells our sails.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Inhuman, that thou art!

Dost thou deny a moment for a father  
To shed a few warm tears o'er his dead son?  
I tell thee, chief, this act might claim a life,  
To do it duly; even a longer life,  
Than sorrow ever suffer'd. Cruel man!  
And thou deniest me moments. Be it so.  
I know you Romans weep not for your children;  
Ye triumph o'er your tears, and think it valour:  
I triumph in my tears. Yes, best-lov'd boy,  
Yes, I can weep, can fall upon thy corse,  
And I can tear my hairs, these few grey hairs,  
The only honours war and age have left me.

# C A R A C T A C U S.

95

Ah son! thou might'st have rul'd o'er many nations,  
As did thy royal ancestry: But I,  
Rash that I was, ne'er knew the golden curb  
Discretion hangs on bravery: Else perchance  
These men, that fasten fetters on thy father,  
Had su'd to him for peace, and claim'd his friendship.

## A U L U S D I D I U S.

But thou wast still implacable to Rome,  
And scorn'd her friendship.

*C A R A C T A C U S starting up from the body.*

Soldier, I had arms,  
Had neighing steeds to whirl my iron cars,  
Had wealth, dominion. Dost thou wonder, Roman,  
I fought to save them? What if Caesar aims  
To lord it universal o'er the world,  
Shall the world tamely crouch at Caesar's footstool?

## A U L U S D I D I U S.

Read in thy fate our answer. Yet if sooner  
Thy pride had yielded——

## C A R A C T A C U S.

Thank thy Gods, I did not.

Had it been so, the glory of thy master,  
Like my misfortunes, had been short and trivial,  
Oblivion's ready prey: Now after struggling  
Nine years, and that right bravely 'gainst a tyrant,  
I am his slave to treat as seems him good;  
If cruelly, 'twill be an easy task  
To bow a wretch, alas! how bow'd already!  
Down to the dust: If well, his clemency,  
When trick'd and varnish'd by your glossing penmen,

Will shine in honour's annals, and adorn  
Himself; it boots not me. Look there, look there,  
The slave that shot that dart, kill'd every hope  
Of lost Caractacus! Arise, my daughter.  
Alas! poor Prince; art thou too in vile fetters?

[To *Elidurus*.

Come hither, youth: Be thou to me a son,  
To her a brother. Thus with trembling arms  
I lead you forth; children, we go to Rome.  
Weep'st thou, my girl? I prithee hoard thy tears  
For the sad meeting of thy captive mother:  
For we have much to tell her, much to say  
Of these good men, who nurtur'd us in Mona;  
Much of the fraud and malice, that pursu'd us;  
Much of her son, who pour'd his precious blood  
To save his sire and sister: Think'st thou, maid,  
Her gentleness can hear the tale, and live?  
And yet she must. O Gods, I grow a talker!  
Grief and old age are ever full of words:  
But I'll be mute. Adieu! ye holy men;  
Yet one look more—Now lead us hence for ever.

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# LETTERS.

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\* Elfrida,  
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# L E T T E R I.

was aware, when I sent you my \* Poem, that it would be liable to the very objections you make to

Yet perhaps they will be obviated to your satisfaction, when I have laid before you (as indeed I ought to have done at first) the original idea which led me to chuse such a subject, and to execute it in so peculiar a manner.

Had I intended to give an exact copy of the ancient Drama, your objections to the present Poem would be unanswerable. But my design was much less confined. I meant only to pursue the antient method, so far as it is probable a Greek Poet, were he alive, would now do, in order to adapt himself to the genius of our times, and the character of our Tragedy. According to this notion, every thing was to be allowed to the present taste, which nature and Aristotle could possibly dispense with; and nothing of intrigue or refinement was to be admitted, at which antient judgment could reasonably take offence. Good sense, as well as antiquity, prescribed an adherence to the three great Unities; these therefore were strictly observed. But on the other hand, to follow the mo-

\* Elfrida, to which these letters were prefixt in the former Editions of that Poem.

dern masters in those respects wherein they had not  
 so faultily deviated from their predecessors, a story  
 was chosen, in which the tender rather than the noble  
 passions were predominant, and in which even love  
 had the principal share. Characters too were drawn  
 as nearly approaching to private ones, as Tragic dig-  
 nity would permit; and affections raised rather from  
 the impulse of common humanity, than the distresses  
 of royalty and the fate of kingdoms. Besides this, for  
 the sake of natural embellishment, and to reconcile  
 mere modern readers to that simplicity of fable, in  
 which I thought it necessary to copy the Ancients,  
 contrived to lay the scene in an old romantic forest.  
 For, by this means, I was enabled to enliven the  
 Poem by various touches of pastoral description; not  
 affectedly brought in from the store-house of a pictu-  
 resque imagination, but necessarily resulting from the  
 scenery of the place itself: A beauty so extremely  
 striking in the Comus of Milton, and the As you  
 like it of Shakespear; and of which the Greek Muse  
 (though fond of rural Imagery) has afforded few ex-  
 amples, besides that admirable one in the Philoctetes  
 of Sophocles.

By this idea I could wish you to regulate your cri-  
 ticism. I need not, I think, observe to you that the  
 deviations from the practice of the Antients may be  
 reasonably defended. For we were long since agreed  
 that where Love does not degenerate into episodic  
 gallantry, but makes the foundation of the distress



is, from the universality of its influence, a passion  
very proper for Tragedy. And I have seen you too  
much moved at the representation of some of our best  
tragedies of private story, to believe you will con-  
demn me for making the other deviation.

K

S



II. Yet, notwithstanding the absurdity of this low superstition, the notion is so popular amongst Englishmen, that I fear it will never be entirely discredited, till a poet rises up amongst us with a genius as elevated and daring as Shakespear's, and a judgment as sober and chastised as Racine's. But as it seems too long to wait for this prodigy, it will not surely be proper for any one of common talents, who would entertain the public without indulging its caprice, to take the best models of antiquity for his guides; and to adapt those models, as near as may be, to the manners and taste of his own times. Unless he do both, he will, in effect, do nothing. For it cannot be doubted, that the many gross faults of our stage are owing to the complaisance and servility, with which the ordinary run of writers have ever humoured that degenerate, whimsical, or corrupted age, in which it was their misfortune to be born.

Milton, you will tell me, is a noble exception to this observation. He is so, and would have been a greater, had he not run into the contrary extreme. The contempt in which, perhaps with justice, he held the age he lived in, prevented him from condescending either to amuse or instruct it. He had, before, shown to his unworthy Countrymen the noblest Poem of his genius, conducted by antient art, could produce; and he had seen them receive it with disregard, if not with dislike. Conscious therefore of his own dignity, and of their demerit, he looked to posterity only for

his reward, and to posterity only directed his future labours. Hence it was perhaps, that he formed his *Samson Agonistes* on a model more simple and severe than Athens herself would have demanded; and took *Æschylus* for his master rather than *Sophocles* or *Euripides*: intending by this conduct to put as great a distance as possible between himself and his contemporary writers; and to make his work (as he himself said) *much different from what amongst them passes for the best*. The success of the Poem was, accordingly, what one would have expected. The age, it appeared in, treated it with total neglect; neither had that posterity, to which he appealed, and which had done justice to most of his other writings, as yet given to this excellent piece its full measure of popular and universal fame. Perhaps, in your closet, and that of a few more, who unaffectedly admire genuine nature and antient simplicity, the *Agonistes* may hold a distinguished rank. Yet, surely, we cannot say (in *Hamlet's* phrase) "*that it pleases the Million; it is fit*" "*Caviar to the general.*"

Hence, I think, I may conclude, that unless one would be content with a very late and very learned posterity, Milton's conduct in this point should not be followed. A Writer of tragedy must certainly adapt himself more to the general taste; because the Dramatic, of all kinds of Poetry, ought to be most universally relished and understood. The Lyric Muse addresses herself to the imagination of a reader; the

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Didactic to his judgment; but the Tragic strikes directly on his passions. Few men have a strength of imagination capable of pursuing the flights of Pindar; many have not a clearness of apprehension suited to the reasonings of Lucretius and Pope: But every man has passions to be excited; and every man feels them excited by Shakespear.

But, though Tragedy be thus chiefly directed to the heart, it must be observed, that it will seldom attain its end without the concurrent approbation of the judgment. And to procure this, the artificial construction of the fable goes a great way. In France, the excellence of their several poets is chiefly measured by this standard. And amongst our own writers, if you except Shakespear (who indeed ought, for his other virtues, to be exempt from common rules) you will find, that the most regular of their compositions is generally reckoned their *Chef d'oeuvre*, witness the *All for Love* of Dryden, the *Venice preserved* of Otway, and the *Jane Shore* of Rowe.

## L E T T E R III.

THE scheme, you proposed in your last, is I own itself with practicable enough. Undoubtedly, most part of the Dialogue of the Chorus might be put into the mouth of an Emma or Matilda, who, with some little shew of sisterly concernment, might be easily made to claim kindred with Earl Athelwold. Nay, by the addition of a few unnecessary incidents, which would cost me no more than they are worth in contriving, and an unmeaning personage or two, who would be as little expence in creating, I believe I could quickly make the whole tolerably fit for an English Audience.

But for all this I cannot persuade myself to enter upon the task. I have, I know not how (like many of my betters) contracted a kind of veneration for the old Chorus; and am willing to think it essential to the Tragic Drama. You shall hear the reasons that incline me to this judgment. They respect the Poet and the Audience.

It is agreed, I think, on all hands, that in the conduct of a fable, the admission of a Chorus lays a necessary restraint on the Poet. The two Unities of time and place, are esteemed by some of less consequence in our modern Tragedy, than the third Unity of Action; but admit a Chorus, and you must,

necessity, restore them to those equal rights, which they antiently enjoyed, and yet claim, by the Charter of Aristotle. For the difference, which the use of the Chorus makes, is this : The modern Drama contents itself with a fact *represented*; the antient requires it to be *represented before Spectators*. Now as it cannot be supposed, that these Spectators should accompany the chief personages into private apartments, one single Scene, or *unity of Place*, becomes strictly necessary. And as these Spectators are assembled on purpose to observe and bear a part in the action, the *time* of that action becomes, of course, that of the spectacle or representation itself; it being unreasonable to make the Spectators attend so long, as the Poet, in bringing about his Catastrophe, may require. And this is usually the practice of the antient Stage. The modern, on the contrary, regards very little these two capital restraints; and its disuse of the Chorus helps greatly to conceal the absurdity. For the Poet, without offending so much against the laws of probability, may lead his personages from one part to another of the same palace or city, when they have only a paltry servant or insignificant Confidant to attend them. He may think himself at liberty to spend two or three days, months, or even years, in completing his story; to clear the stage at the end, or, if he pleases, in the middle of every act: and, being under no controul of the Chorus, he can break the continuity of the Drama, just where he thinks it convenient; and, by the assistance of a brisk fugue and a good violin, can

persuade his audience, that as much time has elapsed as his Hero's, or rather his own distress, may demand.

Hence it is, that secret intrigues become (as Mr. Dryden gravely calls them) the *beauties of our modern Stage*. Hence it is, that Incidents, and Bustle, and *Business*, supply the place of Simplicity, Nature, and Pathos: A happy change, perhaps, for the generality of writers, who might otherwise find it impossible to fill *cette longue carriere de cinq actes*, which a Writer, sufficiently experienced in these matters, says, *est si prodigieusement difficile à remplir sans Episodes*.

But, whatever these Play-makers may have gained by rejecting the Chorus, the true Poet has lost considerably by it. For he has lost a graceful and natural resource to the embellishments of Picturesque Description, sublime allegory, and whatever else comes under the denomination of *pure Poetry*. Shakespear, indeed, had the power of introducing this naturally, and, what is most strange, of joining it with *pure Passion*. But I make no doubt, if we had a Tragedy of his formed on the Greek model, we should find in it more frequent, if not nobler instances of his high Poetical capacity, than in any single composition he has left us. I think you have a proof of this in those parts of his historical plays, which are called Choruses, and written in the common Dialogue metre. And your imagination will easily conceive, how fine an ode the description of the night preceding the battle of Agin-

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court, would have made in his hands; and what additional grace it would receive from that form of composition.

With the means of introducing Poetry naturally is lost, also, the opportunity of conveying moral reflections with grace and propriety. But this comes more properly under consideration, when I give you my thoughts on the advantage the audience received from a well-conducted Chorus.

## L E T T E R IV.

**I**N my last I took no notice of that superior pomp and majesty, which the Chorus necessarily added to the scene of the Drama. I made no remarks on the agreeable variety it introduced into the versification and metre; nor shewed how, by uniting the harmony of the Lyre to the pomp of the Buskin, music became intimately connected with it, and furnished it with all its additional graces. These and many other advantages I might have insisted upon, had I thought them so material as the two I mentioned; the latter of which, namely, its being a proper vehicle for moral and sentiment, is so material, that I think nothing can possibly atone for the loss of it.

In those parts of the Drama, where the judgment of a mixt audience is most liable to be misled by what passes before its view, the chief actors are generally too much agitated by the furious passions, or too much attached by the tender ones, to think coolly, and impress on the spectators a moral sentiment properly. A Confidant or Servant has seldom sense enough to do it, never dignity enough to make it regarded. Instead therefore of these the Ancients were provided with a band of distinguished persons, not merely capable of seeing and hearing, but of arguing, advising, and reflecting; from the leader of which a

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moral sentiment never came unnaturally, but suitably and gracefully; and from the troop itself, a poetical flow of tender commiseration, of religious supplication, or of virtuous triumph, was ever ready to heighten the pathos, to inspire a reverential awe of the Deity, and to advance the cause of *honesty* and of truth.

If you ask me, how it augmented the pathetic, I cannot give you a better answer than the *abbé Vatri* has done in his dissertation on the subject, published in the *Memoirs de l'Acad. des Inscr. &c.* "It effected  
 "this (says he) both in its *odes* and *dialogue*. The  
 "wonderful power of Music and the Dance is universally allowed. And, as these were always *accompanied*  
 "to the Odes, there is no doubt but they  
 "contributed greatly to move the passions. It was  
 "necessary that there should be odes or intermedes,  
 "but it was also necessary, that these intermedes  
 "should not suffer the minds of the Audience to  
 "cool, but on the contrary, should support and fortify those passions which the previous scenes had  
 "already excited. Nothing imaginable could produce  
 "this effect better, than the choral songs and dances, which filled the mind with ideas corresponding  
 "to the subject, and never failed to add new force to  
 "the sentiments of the principal personages. In the  
 "Dialogue also, the Chorus served to move the passions, by shewing to the spectators other spectators  
 "strongly affected by the action. A spectacle of such  
 "a kind as is fitted to excite in us the passions of

" Terror, and Pity, will not of itself so strongly affect  
 " us, as when we see others, also, affected by it.  
 " The painters have generally understood this secret,  
 " and have had recourse to an expedient, similar to  
 " that of the Chorus of the poets. Not content with  
 " the simple representation of an historical event, they  
 " have also added groups of assistant figures, and ex-  
 " pressed in their faces the different passions, they would  
 " have their picture excite. Nay they sometimes in-  
 " list into their service even irrational animals. In  
 " the *slaughter of the Innocents*, le Brun was not satis-  
 " fied with expressing all the horror, of which the  
 " subject is naturally capable, he has also painted two  
 " horses with their hair standing on end, and starting  
 " back, as afraid to trample upon the bleeding in-  
 " fants. This is an artifice which has often been  
 " employed, and which has always succeeded. A good  
 " poet should do the same; and Iphigenia should not  
 " be suffered to appear on the Theatre, without being  
 " accompanied with persons capable of feeling her  
 " misfortunes."

Had this ingenious Abbé seen the famous Belisarius of Vandyke, I am apt to believe he would have  
 thought it a much more noble illustration of the mat-  
 ter. The Soldier in that piece, though so much con-  
 demned by our modern Professors of *Virtù* for being  
 as they say, the principal Figure, is the very thing  
 which raises this picture from a simple Portrait (which  
 it must otherwise have been) to the finest moral paint-

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ing; and in Greece would have placed the painter  
by it, amongst that class of Artists, which they esteemed the  
secret, noblest, the ΗΘΟΥΡΑΦΟΙ. The greatest Tragic Poet  
could not have raised a more exquisite distress than  
this judicious painter has done by the attitude of that  
Soldier; as well as by the subordinate figures, which  
with great propriety, are female ones; nothing being  
so likely to raise in a military mind that mixture of  
pity and disdain, which he wanted to express, as to  
see such a hero relieved by charity, and that too the  
charity of girls and old women.

But, returning to my subject, I will just observe to  
you, that if it be proper to assist an audience in relish-  
ing the pathetic, by shewing an imitation of that pa-  
thos in the Chorus, it is much more so to instruct  
them how to be affected properly, with the characters  
and actions which are represented in the course of the  
Drama. The character of Pierre in *Venice preserv-  
ed*, when left entirely to the judgment of the audi-  
ence, is perhaps one of the most improper for publick  
view, that ever was produced on any stage. It is al-  
most impossible, that some part of the spectators  
would go from the representation with very false and  
immoral impressions. But had the Tragedy been writ-  
ten on the antient plan; had Pierre's character been  
drawn just as it is, and some few alterations made in  
affair's, I know no two characters more capable of  
giving service in a moral view, when justly animadver-

ted upon by the Chorus. I don't say, I would have trusted Otway with the writing of it.

To have done, and to release you. Bad characters become on this plan as harmless in the hands of the Poet, as the Historian; and good ones become infinitely more useful, by how much the Poetic is more forcible than the Historical mode of instruction.

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## L E T T E R V.

THE reason, why in a former Letter you advised me to alter the Chorus, is made very apparent in your last. For, by persuading me to get the Odes set to music, and to risk the Play on the stage, I understand only that you are willing, any how, to make it a more profitable work for me, than it can possibly be by means of the press alone.

Yet certainly, Sir, one single reflection on our British pit will make you change your sentiments effectually. Think only on the trial made by M. Racine, in a nation much before ours, in a taste for probability and decorum in Theatrical diversions. In his two last Tragedies, you know, he has fully succeeded in the very thing I aimed at; and has adapted a noble imitation of antient simplicity to the taste of his own times: particularly in his *Athalie*, a poem in which the most superb and august spectacle, the most interesting event, and the most sublime flow of inspired Poetry, are all nobly and naturally united. Yet I am told, that neither that, nor the *Esther*, retains its Chorus, when represented on the French Theatre.

To what is this owing? To the refinement most certainly of our modern music. This art is now car-

ried to such a pitch of perfection, or if you will of corruption; which makes it utterly incapable of being an adjunct to Poetry. *Il y a grand apparence, que les progrès que vous avez faits dans la musique, ont mis enfin à ceux de la véritable Tragedie. C'est un talent, qui a fait tort à un autre ;* says M. Voltaire with his usual taste and judgment. Our different cadences, our divisions, variations, repetitions, without which modern music cannot subsist, are entirely improper for the expression of poetry, and were scarce known to the Ancients.

But could this be managed, the additional expence necessarily attendant on such a performance, would make the matter impracticable. This M. Dryden foresaw long ago. The passage is curious.

“ A new Theatre, much more ample and much  
 “ deeper, must be made for that purpose; besides the  
 “ cost of sometimes forty or fifty habits: which is an  
 “ expence too large to be supplied by a company of  
 “ actors. It is true, I should not be sorry to see  
 “ *Chorus* on a Theatre, more than as large and as  
 “ deep again as ours, built and adorned at a King’s  
 “ charges; and on that condition, and another, which  
 “ is, that my hands were not bound behind me, as  
 “ now they are, I should not despair of making such  
 “ a Tragedy as might be both instructive and delight-  
 “ ful according to the manner of the Grecians.”  
 What he means by having his hands bound, I imagine

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 Dryden  
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Pembroke



is, that he was either engaged to his subscribers for a Translation of Virgil, or to the manager of the Theatre for so many plays a season. This suffrage of Mr. Dryden is, however, very apposite to the present point. It serves, also, to vindicate my design of imitating the Greek Drama. For, if he, who was so prejudiced to the modern stage, as to think intrigue a capital beauty in it; if he, I say, owns that the grand secret *prodesse et delectare* was the characteristic of the Greek Drama only, nothing can better justify my present attempt than the approbation he gives to it in this passage.

Having now settled with you all matters of general criticism. I hope in your next you will give me your objections to *scenes, speeches, images, &c.* And be assured I shall treat your judgment in these matters with greater deference, than I have done in what related to the Stage and the Chorus.

Pembroke Hall, 1751.

that he was not to be taken into consideration for a  
man of 74, or to the advantage of the T. S.  
for so many years a laborer. This is the only  
reason is, however, very opposite to the point at issue.  
I have, also, to submit my desire of continuing  
the Great Britain. For it has been proposed  
to the trustees, as to their interest, a  
very high, if not the highest, of the  
right to be taken was the characteristic of the Great  
Britain only, nothing can better justify my desire  
than the reputation he has to it in the  
public.

My dear Sir,  
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst. and in reply to inform you that I have been in what is  
called the Stage and the Company.

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# ILLUSTRATIONS.

\* II

Reside

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## \* ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page 10. ver. 19.

On the left,

Reside the sages † skill'd in nature's lore :

† i. e. The Euvates; one of the three classes of the Druids, according to Am. Marcellinus. *Studia liberalium doctrinarum inchoata per Bardos, Euvates, & Druidas.* This class, Strabo tells us, had the care of the sacrifices, and studied natural philosophy; which here, by *the changeful universe*, is shewn to be on Pythagorean principles. Whenever the *Priests* are mentioned in the subsequent parts of the Drama, this order of men is intended to be meant, as distinguished from the Druids and Bards.

Page 13. ver. 14.

Thou shalt live ;

Yet shalt thou live an interdicted wretch,

All rights of nature cancell'd.

Alluding to the Druidical power of excommunication, mentioned by Caesar. *Si quis aut privatus, aut*

---

\* The above quotations, from antient authors, are here thrown together, in order to support and explain some passages in the Drama of Caractacus, that

publicus, eorum decreto non stetit, sacrificiis interdicunt. Haec poena apud eos est gravissima. Quibus ita est interdictum, ii numero impiorum ac sceleratorum habentur—neque iis petentibus jus redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur. C. Comment. Lib. vi.

Page 18. ver. 5.

Are the milk-white steers prepar'd?

In the minute description which Pliny gives us of the ceremony of gathering the mistletoe, he tells us, they sacrificed two white bulls. See Pliny's Natural History, l. xvi. c. 44. which Drayton, in his Polyolbion, thus versifies.

Sometimes within my shades, in many an antient wood,  
Whose often twined tops great Phoebus' fires with stood,  
The fearless British priest, under an aged oak,  
Taking a milk-white bull, unstrained with the yoke,  
And with an axe of gold, from that Jove-sacred tree  
The mistletoe cut down; then with a bended knee  
On th'unhewn altar laid, put to the hallow'd fires;  
And whilst in the sharp flame the trembling flesh ex-  
pires,  
As their strong fury mov'd (when all the rest adore)  
Pronouncing their desires the sacrifice before,

respect the manners of the Druids; and which, the general account of their customs, to be found in our histories of Britain, does not include.

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rum fama,  
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tur. Druid  
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# ILLUSTRATIONS.

123

Up to th' eternal heav'n their bloodied hands did rear :  
And whilst the murm'ring woods ev'n shudder'd as  
with fear,

Preach'd to the beardless youth the soul's immortal  
state ;

To other bodies still how it should transmigrate,  
That to contempt of death them strongly did excite.

Ninth Song.

Page 18. ver. 24.

Where our matron sister dwells.

The existence of female Druids seems ascertained  
by Tacitus, in his description of the final destruction  
of Mona by Paulinus Suetonius. Stabat pro litore di-  
versa acies densa armis virisque, *intercursantibus foemi-  
nis*, &c. Also by the known story of Dioclesian, on  
which Fletcher formed a play, called the Prophetess.

Page 19. ver. 1.

And the potent adder-stone.

The ovum anguinum, or serpents egg; a famous  
Druidical amulet, thus circumstantially described by  
Pliny.—Præterea est ovorum genus in magna Gallia-  
rum fama, omissum Graecis. Angues innumeri æs-  
tate convoluti, salivis faucium corporumque spumis  
artifici complexu glomerantur; Anguinum appella-  
tur. Druidæ sibilis id dicunt in sublime jactari, sago-  
que oportere intercipi, ne tellurem attingat. Profu-

gere raptorem equo, serpentes enim insequi, donec ar-  
ceantur, amnis alicujus interventu, &c. Nat. Hist.  
l. xxix. c. 3.

There are remains of this superstition still, both in  
the northern and western parts of our island. For  
Lhwyd, the author of the Archeologia, writes thus to  
Rowland: see *Mona Antiqua*, p. 338. "The Druid  
" doctrine about the *Glain Neidr*, obtains very much  
" through all Scotland, as well lowlands as high-  
" lands; but there is not a word of it in this king-  
" dom (Ireland); where, as there are no snakes, they  
" could not propagate it. Besides snake-stones, the  
" highlanders have their snail-stones, paddock stones,  
" &c. to all which they attribute their several vir-  
" tues, and wear them as amulets." And in another  
letter he writes, "The Cornish retain variety of  
" charms, and have still, towards the land's end, the  
" amulet of Maen Magal, and Glain Neidr, which  
" latter they call a Milpreu, or Melpreu, and have  
" charm for the snake to make it, when they have  
" found one asleep, and struck a hazel wand in the  
" centre of her spires."

Page 33. ver. 13.

Have the milk-white steeds

Unrein'd, and, neighing, pranc'd with fav'ring steps

The few and imperfect accounts antiquity gives  
of ceremonies, &c. which are unquestionably Druid-  
cal, makes it necessary in this, and in other places

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ex apud eo

ne flaminis.



the Drama, to have recourse to Tacitus's account of the Germans, amongst whom, if there were really no establish'd Druids, there was certainly a great correspondency, in religious opinions, with the Gauls and Britons. The passage here alluded to, is taken from this 10th chapter. *Proprium gentis, equorumque quoque praeſagia ac monitus experiri. Publice aluntur iisdem nemoribus ac lucis, candidi & nullo mortali opere contacti, quos preſſos ſacro curru, ſacerdos ac rex, vel princeps civitatis comitantur, hinnitus & fremitus obſervant, nec ulli auſpicio major fides non ſolum apud plebem, ſed apud proceres, apud ſacerdotes.*

Page 34. ver. 10.

Thou art a king, a ſov'reign o'er frail man;  
I am a Druid, ſervant of the Gods.  
Such ſervice is above ſuch ſov'reignty.

The ſupreme authority of the Druids over their ſubjects, is thus aſcertained by Dion. Chryſoſtom. —

Ἰστοῦσι δὲ οὕς ὀνομάζουσι Δρυΐδας, καὶ τὸν περὶ Μανικὴν  
ἱστοῦσι, καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν, ὣν ἀντι, τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν  
ἐν ἑξῇ πρᾶττειν, ὡς βουλευσθαι, ὥς τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς  
αἰνέειν ἄρχειν, τοὺς δὲ βασιλεῖας, αὐτῶν ὑπερέτας καὶ  
ἀκόντους γίγνεσθαι τῆς γνώμης, ἐν θρόνοις χρυσοῖς καθη-  
μένους, καὶ οἰκίας μεγάλας οἰκῶντας, καὶ πολυτίμως εὐω-  
μένους. Helmodus alſo de Slavis, l. ii. c. 12. aſſerts.

rex apud eos modicae eſt aeſtimationis in comparati-  
one ſlaminis,

Page 35. ver. 2.

'The time will come, when destiny and death  
'Thron'd in a burning car.

Strabo, and other writers, tells us, the Druids taught, that the world was finally to be destroyed by fire; upon which this allegory is founded.

Page 42. ver. 9.

The gods, my brethren,  
Have wak'd these doubts in the untainted breast  
Of this mild maiden.

Inesse enim sanctum quid & providum foeminae putant. Nec aut consilia ipsorum aspernantur, aut responsa negant. Tac. de morib. Germ. And Strabo to the like purpose, l. vii. "Ἀπαντες γὰρ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀρχηγὸς οἰοῦνται τὰς γυναῖκας.

Page 46. ver. 24.

Behold yon huge  
And unhewn sphere of living adamant.

This is meant to describe the rocking-stone, which there are several still to be seen in Wales, Cornwall, and Derbyshire. They are universally supposed, by antiquarians, to be Druid monuments and Mr. Toland thinks, "that the Druids made the people believe that they only could move them" and that by a miracle, by which they condemn

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ΑΗΝΗΣ ἀν  
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χρῶνται ταῦ  
μετὰ δὲ νόμους  
&c.

"or acquitted the accused, and often brought criminals to confess what could in no other way be extorted from them." It was this conjecture which gave the hint for this piece of machinery. The reader may find a description of one of these rocking-stones in Camden's *Britannia*, in his account of *Pembrokeshire*; and also several in *Borlase's history of Cornwall*.

Page 72. ver. 14.

—————And its name  
Trifingus.

The name of the enchanted sword in the *Hervares Saga*.

Page 72. ver. 21.

By the bright circle of the golden sun.

This adjuration is taken from the literal form of the old Druidical oath, which they administered to their disciples; and which the learned Selden, in *Prolog. de Diis Syr.* gives us from *Vettius Valens Antiochenus*, l vii. It is as follows: Τὴς ταῖς παραγγελίαις ἡμῶν πειθομένους ὀρχίζω **ΗΑΙΟΥ** μὲν ἱερὸν κύλλον καὶ **ΣΕΛΙΝΗΣ** ἀνωμάλους δρόμους, τῶν τε λοιπῶν **ΑΣΤΕΡΩΝ** δυνάμεις καὶ κύκλον **ΔΥΟΚΑΙΔΕΚΑ ΖΩΔΙΩΝ**, ἐν ἀτοκροῖς ταῦτα ἔχειν, καὶ τοῖς ἀπαιδεύτοις ἢ ἀμυήτοις μὴ μετὰ δίδόναι, τιμὴν τε καὶ μνήμην τῷ εἰσηγησάμενῳ ἀπονέμειν, &c.

Page 80. ver. 18.

Near each a white-rob'd Druid, whose stern voice  
'Thunder'd deep execrations on the foe.

This account is taken from what history tells us did really happen some years after, when the groves of Mona were destroyed by Suetonius Paulinus. Igitur Monam insulam incolis validam, & receptaculum perfugarum aggredi parat, navesque fabricatur plano alveo, adversus breve litus & incertum. Sic Pedes; equites vado secuti, aut altiores inter undas, adnantes equis transnavigare. Stabat pro litore diversa acies densa armis virisque, intercurrentibus foeminis: in modum Furiarum, veste ferali crinibus dejectis *faces* praeferrebant. Druidae circum, preces diras sublatis ad coelum manibus fundentes, novitate aspectus perculere milites ut quasi haerentibus membris, immobile corpus vulneribus praeberent. Dein cohortationibus ducis, & se ipsi stimulantibus ne muliebri & fanaticum agmen pavescerent, inferunt signa, sternuntque obvios & igni suo involvunt. Tac. Ann. l. xiv. c. 29.

Page 90. ver. 19.

These shapeless symbols of your barbarous gods.

The Druids did not really worship the divinity under any symbol. But this is put intentionally into the mouth of the Roman, as mistaking the rude stones placed round the grove, for idols. Thus Lucan

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# ILLUSTRATIONS.

129

in a beautiful description of a Druid grove,

————— simulacraque moesta deorum  
Arte carent caelisque extant informia truncis,  
Phar. Lib. iii.

Some imagery from the same description is also borrowed in the opening of the Drama.

Page 95. ver. 9.

————— Soldier, I had arms.

This passage, and some others in this scene, are taken from Caractacus's famous speech in Tacitus, before the throne of Claudius; but here adapted to his dramatic character.

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Letters r  
Illustratio

C O N T E N T S

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VOLUME SECOND.

CARACTACUS	1
Letters relative to Elfrida	98
Illustrations of Caractacus	121

C O M M I T T E E

of

VOLUME SECOND

CHARACTERS

7

22

122

Illustrations of the  
Lithography of the



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